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Historical
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HISTORICAL STUDIES

HISTORICAL STUDIES

RELATING CHIEFLY TO STAFFORDSHIRE

BY

J. L. CHERRY AND KARL CHERRY

*If any there be which are desirous to be strangers
in their own soile and forrainers in their own
citie, they may so continue, and therein flatter
themselves. For such like I have not written
these lines nor taken these paines.—CAMDEN.*

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Antiquities, or remnants of history, are, as was said, Pictures of a Wreck ; in which industrious persons, by an exact and scrupulous diligence and observation, out of monuments, names, words, traditions, private records and evidences, fragments of stories, passages of books that concern not story, and the like, do save and recover something from the deluge of time.—BACON.*

PREFACE.

The student of medicine is taught his anatomy by many and different methods. Not the least important of these is the display, in his museum, of sections, carried through the human frame so as to demonstrate the relation one organ bears to another ; to show how exactly the contour of each is moulded and accommodated to that of its neighbour ; how all are dovetailed with each other ; how each member depends upon the others for standing room in the community, and for the performance of its proper functions in the commonwealth of man's body. Such sections, by their sweeping and comprehensive exposure of a concert of powers working together to one supreme end, teach anatomy, as it were, imperially.

The student must not neglect, however, the microscope slides—those insignificant slips of glass on which are mounted tiny sections through parts of the organs themselves. Here again he sees a similar interdependence, on a more parochial scale, of one minute cell upon another, and a similar joint-stock association among the microscopical units of the human frame.

To display a sectional view of our race, to exhibit within the compass of a single work the mutual reaction of all those events that have gone to make England what she is, is a task to be undertaken only by those great master scribes of history of whom we seem to have lost the most modern in the late Lord Acton. It is given to few, however, to make those sweeping dissections in the "grand manner" of the classic historians, and ours has been a far more modest undertaking.

Conscious of our limitations in knowledge, in comprehensiveness of outlook, and in powers of generalisation, we have been content to use the microscope on one or two small subdivisions of certain larger sections that have been prepared by abler hands than ours. Still, we venture to believe that in each of these studies there may be discerned dimly the elemental units and primitive activities that have been engaged in the "cell growth" of this country.

These studies are concerned with the Type. Saints other than Bertelin have founded other towns than Stafford ; priests no less humble than Chad, no less strenuous than Sexwulf, have occupied the seats of the mighty ; noblemen other than Northampton have fought and died for an idea ; Boscobel is only one sanctuary among those sought by many fugitive kings.

It has been our endeavour so to illuminate the Individual that a clearer perception may be had of the Class, and of the part played by the latter, in the aggregate, in the making of England. Often, too, we shall see in some fragment of local history a miniature replica of that larger " island story " of which the poet has sung.

In one respect our work differs from that of the medical microscopist. The latter finds it necessary to stain his sections, if he would observe their secret and most significant characters. Our exhibits—or, at least, many of them—were already stained in the mass from which they were taken ; sometimes, alas, they are black with treason and red with English blood.

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* Reprinted, with additions, from *The Staffordshire Advertiser*.

St. Bertelin and the Antiquity of Stafford.

By J. L. CHERRY.

THE writer of the following contribution to local history, having been known to hold the opinion that the town of Stafford might claim an antiquity of 1,200 years, has been invited to state the grounds on which that opinion is based and also challenged to make good the claim. He will endeavour to do so.

ST. BERTELIN.

Since the whole question of the antiquity of Stafford is bound up with that of the identity and personality of an almost-forgotten saint, it will be well to clear the ground by weighing the evidence, first, of his having ever existed at all; secondly, of his having ever settled at Stafford; and, thirdly, of his having been of sufficient sanctity and attractiveness to gather round himself the nucleus of the future town.

SOURCES OF INFORMATION.

The principal sources of information as to the character and career of St. Bertelin are references to him by one of his contemporaries, a monk named Felix, who wrote a life of St. Guthlac; Ingulphus, abbot of Croyland, who was installed in 1076; a life of St. Bertelin by a monk named Alexander (1220); and the "Acta Sanctorum,"^a which discusses and criticizes all these authorities.

^a The "Acta Sanctorum" is a monumental literary work which probably has no parallel in the Western world. The copy in the library of the British Museum consists of 64 large-folio volumes, all in mediæval Latin. This great work was begun as long ago as 1607 by Père Herbert Rosweeda, a Belgian. He died in 1629 after completing the 7th volume. His mantle fell on John Bollandus, also a Belgian. He was an enthusiast who secured the coöperation of some of the most learned Catholic divines of the Continent, all and always members of the Society of Jesus: these together formed a community known from that time forward as the Bollandists. When John Bollandus died the 51st volume had been completed. Other Jesuit fathers carried on the work until 1794, when they were interrupted by the incursion of French troops into Belgium. Little more was done until 1837, when a new issue was begun under the editorship of Father Joanne Carnandet, whose name will frequently appear in the following pages. The latest issue is dated 1853, and the great undertaking is not yet completed.

THE STORY OF FELIX.

Felix was not only a contemporary of Bertelin but knew him sufficiently well to have speech with him regarding the biography of St. Guthlac. He says "There was a certain clerk called Bertellinus, who offered himself of his own free will as servant to so great a man, and resolved to live chastely to God under Guthlac's correction; whose heart the spirit of malice entered and began to puff him up with the pestiferous pride of self-glory; and then, when he had drawn him from the path by the fulsome blasts of empty pride he began even to suggest to him that he should by means of a murderous sword slay his master, under whose discipline he had begun to live to God, putting this object before his mind, that if he should succeed in doing him to death he himself would occupy Guthlac's place and enjoy great worship from kings and princes. So upon a certain day, when the aforesaid clerk had come, according to his custom, to shave Guthlac the man of God, after an interval of 20 days, he thirsted, vexed as he was by the great madness in his soul, with uncontrollable desire, after the blood of the man of God, and approached him with the fixed intention of slaying him.

"Then the saintly Guthlac, to whom the Lord still vouchsafed a foreknowledge of things to come, understood the impending, strange, and impious horror, and began to question Bertellinus saying 'O, my Bertellinus, why dost thou conceal the ancient enemy in thine oppressed bosom? Why dost thou not cast up the deadly draught of bitter poison? For I know thou art deceived by the spirit of malice; therefore turn thee from and confess the wicked thoughts which the hostile accuser of the human race has put into thee.' Then Bertellinus understood that he had been seduced by the spirit of malice, and, casting himself at the feet of Guthlac, the holy man, confessed his crime with a tearful voice and humbly sued for pardon. Thereupon Guthlac of blessed memory not only pardoned his fault but promised that he would come to assist him in his future tribulations. . . . But at last the time came for Guthlac, that man of God, to lay down the burden of his flesh, which by long use he had studied to subdue. On the fourth vigil before Easter he was seized with a sudden indisposition, and announced to his companion Bertel-

linus that on the eighth day after he would pass over from this vale of tears. 'Do not,' said he, 'do not weep, my son. I go to the reward of my labours, to everlasting sojourn with the Master I have served.' On the fourth day of Guthlac's illness Easter was celebrated, and after he had solemnized the Paschal Mass and received the last sacraments of our salvation he conversed with Bertellinus, who had ministered to him at the Lord's table, with such sweetness of sacred eloquence and mysterious wisdom that it seemed not he but rather an angel of the Lord was speaking. Thereupon Bertellinus, perceiving in the face of the man of God that the hour for his laying down the burden was now at hand, began instantly to inquire of him what he had never presumed to ask before. 'I implore thee,' said he, 'father, by Christ's mercy, that thou shouldest deign to reveal to me more clearly how it was that I heard thee, from the first day of my living with thee, holding mutual converse with another daily, morning and evening, and with whom thou wast speaking I have not known.' The friend of God replied with his usual benignity, 'My dearest son, my last day is even now at hand, and it would ill become me to speak a lie, when since my first conversion I have eschewed every falsehood; know, therefore, that ever since I took to this solitude I have always had, morning and evening, my angel of consolation, who lightened my labour and temptations by his celestial comfort, predicted the future, shewed forth absent things, and revealed from on high those celestial mysteries which I may not utter, nor would it profit to do so. But do thou, my son, cover these things in silence and tell them to no mortal save only to my sister Pega and Egbert, the anchorite, at any time.' On the morrow, the sighs and sobs which are the usual heralds of death had already shaken the breast of the blessed saint, and from his mouth there issued as sweet a savour as if someone had scattered roses or poured forth balsam; and on the following night, when the often-mentioned brother Bertellinus was watching and guarding by the man of God, he saw with deep amazement that from midnight to daybreak a dazzling splendour of light shone about the whole house. But when the sun was now rising, Guthlac, the beloved of God, called Bertellinus his disciple to him, and said, 'My son, the time is come that I should pass over to Him whose servant I am, and that thou shouldest go thy own ways.' Then, stretching forth his hand to the altar, he

comforted himself with the sacred elements, and lifting his eyes and hands to heaven he fell asleep in the Lord.

"A celestial splendour had prefigured the passing of the most blessed saint, and the intensity of the heavenly light illustrated it spiritually; for when the sun was now in his power and his mid-day beams scorching, the blessed Bertellinus saw as it were a fiery chariot raised from earth even to the sky, the splendour of which was so great that by comparison with it the sun's light grew weak and pale. Bertellinus, seized by great terror, fled to a little boat and rowed over with all haste to Pega, the holy virgin of Christ, the sister of the blessed Guthlac. Pega, with the blessed Bertellinus, gave course to the natural tears due to a brother's death, and then, giving thanks and commending his soul to God, commended herself to his prayers; and when the obsequies of the saintly man had been most devoutly performed, and his body given to the earth in his own oratory, the blessed virgin Pega returned to her own quarters."

So far, Felix.

THE ANALECTA OF INGULPHUS.

The learned Ingulphus, who wrote in the 11th century a history of Croyland Abbey, has the following remarks bearing on Bertelin, whom he calls Bettelinus:—"Moreover, in the same island (Croyland) there were in those days several hermits who clave to the man of God (St. Guthlac) in holy familiarity while he lived, as sick folk to the physician, and drew from his instruction and example a rich source of salvation for their souls. One of them had been recently converted to the Catholic faith, Cissa by name, a man of noble birth and formerly of great authority in his worldly estate, who left all and followed after Christ his Lord. Another was Bettelinus, a servant of the aforesaid father (Guthlac) and very intimate with him. A third was Egbert, who shared his secrets more deeply than other men. A fourth was Tatwine, once his guide and ship's captain on his voyage to the island. All these had separate lodgings in single cabins not far from the oratory of our holy father Guthlac to the end of their lives, by permission of the aforementioned abbot Kenulph."

Father Joanne Carnandet has the following remarks on this excerpt from Ingulphus:—"According to this account, the servant

of St. Guthlac, call him Beccelinus, Bettelinus, or Bertellinus, as you please, endured in the same solitude to the end of his life after the death of his master and the erection by King Ethelbald (as the narration previously details) of a monastery at the saint's tomb, over which Kenulph held rule. The same Ingulph records him (Bertellinus) to have been buried in this very spot, where, after having dated a Danish invasion in the year 871, he proceeds in these words:—'But the Danes broke up with ploughshares and axes all the tombs of the saints who were reposing in high marble monuments about the tomb of the holy father Guthlac to right and to left, namely, on the right hand side the tomb of St. Cissa, priest and anchorite, and the tomb of St. Bettelinus, a man of God and once the servant of St. Guthlac; also the tomb of St. Tatwine, once Guthlac's guide to Croyland and his ship's captain. But when they did not find the treasure which they expected they became extremely wroth, dragged all the bodies of the saints into one heap (the pity of it!), and setting fire to them burnt up both them, the church, and all the monastery buildings most lamentably.' "

ST. GUTHLAC AND BECCELIN.

Among the mediæval manuscripts exhibited in the King's Library at the British Museum is a 12th century roll of vellum bearing eighteen circular medallion drawings illustrating incidents in the life of St. Guthlac. Dr. Walter de Gray Birch says of this work, which he has annotated, that it "stands unique in its place as an example of the finest Early English style of free-hand drawing." The names of the principal persons in the drawings are neatly written over their heads and in several places Bec-celm or Beccelin appears. In one place he is "seated in adoration of the Eucharist, shown by the chalice upon the altar;" in another (the scene of the death of Guthlac) he is represented "kneeling on his right knee, extending his hands, and gazing earnestly and affectionately at the dying face of him whom once he had been tempted to destroy;" once more, he is depicted in the boat in which Pega is to be conveyed to Croyland from her residence at the monastery of Peykirk in Northamptonshire to perform the obsequies of her brother. "Pega, in sorrowful mood, vested

in loosely flowing garb and with a whimple on her head, which is bowed in dejection, is on the right, just in the act of stepping from the flower-strewn bank into the forepart of the boat, while Beccelin takes her hand to assist her movements."

PRIOR ALEXANDER'S "LIFE" AND LEGENDS.

The biographer who has drawn most freely upon his predecessor's and his own imagination (though Felix has there run him close) is Alexander Essibiensis, prior of Regulars at Roode Klooster, in Belgium. Of him, Joannes Pitseus, an early writer, says, "Alexander Essibiensis, a chronicler of Somerset as some say, of Stafford as others say, was born in the West of England, where also he embraced the order of the regular canons of St. Augustine, and at last became prior of a certain monastery. He was a man of honourable and godly life, of great reading and scholarship, *facile princeps* among the rhetoricians and poets of his age and our nation, as well as being no contemptible theologian. He aimed in everything rather at simple piety than at subtle reasoning, and treated little of things profane but largely of things sacred. He flourished in the year of salvation 1220, when Henry III. sat at the helm of the English state."

This, then, is Alexander's story:—"Since the more unknown to our perception some helpful thing has been, the greater is the value we set upon it when we take cognizance of it, I will endeavour to set out succinctly, in a few words, the life of the blessed Bertellinus the Confessor from the ancient histories, as I cannot relate the whole of the saint's acts. Therefore, lest a prolix relation beget weariness in the listener, let us listen attentively to a compendious presentment of the truth. Bertellinus, an Englishman, the pious offspring of a King, noble in race, noble in figure, nobler in his Catholic faith, refused to stain his life with his father's excesses, and crossing the water became intimate with an Irish King, meriting above all the grace of love; but as our Father which is in heaven sometimes permits men to sin for the sake of greater repentance to follow, he was smitten with love for the King's daughter and abducted her to England when she was with child; which fact I tell that sinners may not be ignorant of the reason for his surprising penance.

"They were in hiding in a dense forest when lo! the time of her childbirth came upon them suddenly; bourne of pain and river of sorrow! A pitiful childbed indeed! While Bertellinus went out to get the necessary help of a midwife the woman and her child breathed their last amid the fangs of wolves. Bertellinus on his return imagined that this calamity had befallen because of his own sin, and spent three days in mourning rites. Ask not if he were a sad man then. He served God there in solitude with previously unheard of mortifications, having in true contrition his sin always before his eyes and leading a life of contemplation. And holy and merciful God, not despising a humble and contrite heart, forgave him many sins, according to the multitude of his mercies, for he loved much. He loved God; he was loved of God; he magnified Christ with good works; he was magnified by Christ with many miracles. The spirit of malice tempted the holy man, saying, 'Say that these stones may become bread! Bertellinus confounded the Devil by the opposite of his temptations, for he did not change stones into bread, but, on the contrary, bread into stones, and so flouted the devilish temptation. These stones may still be seen as a testimony to the miracle at a place called Bertelmesley.'"^b

The following passage purports to be copied verbatim by Alexander from Felix' "Life of St. Guthlac":—"Now as Guthlac wished to lead the life of an anchorite he left Reppington [Repton] taking with him two youths (of whom was the aforesaid Bertellinus, son to the King of the Stafford tribe)^c who clave continually to the holy man that they might order their own lives aright. . . . The two saints, Guthlac and Bertellinus, passed many years in that island [Croyland] in the service of God, and many miracles were done by them." The passages already quoted on pages 2—4 beginning "But at last" and ending

^b The Rev. Edward Hinchliffe, now rector of Muckleston, North Staffordshire, published some years ago a volume entitled "Barthomley: Letters from a former Rector to his Eldest Son." Mr. Hinchliffe informs us that Bertelin is the patron saint of Barthomley, which place-name he regards as a modification of Bertelin. The volume also includes a rhymed version of the story of St. Bertelin from the pen of Cardinal Newman. The rhymes are very simple, and suggest that the great ecclesiastic might have written them as a relaxation after some such lofty flight as "The Dream of Gerontius." They are printed in the Cardinal's "Lives of the English Saints."

^c "In the Life of Guthlac" by Felix, says Father Carnandet, "he is stated to have had two lads (*pueri*) as companions when he retired from Repton to Croyland, but their names are not given, so I do not know how Alexander learnt that Bertellinus was one of them." In another place Felix calls Bertellinus "a clerk," and the word "*pueri*" may mean "servants" or "disciples."

"to her own quarters," come in here, but it is not necessary to repeat them. Then follows, in Alexander's manuscript, what he calls chap. II. with the heading, "Bertellinus withdraws into the wilds of Stafford; his death, burial, and miracle." This, Father Carnandet says, "is apparently an original composition" by Alexander, and in his own notes to the "Life" in the "Acta Sanctorum" he takes no pains to conceal his belief that some passages are incredible and others "pure invention." However, the story is given here, for whether it is credible or not, it forms part of the literature of our subject. It reads thus:—"Finally, St. Bertellinus, despising temporal glory altogether, approached the King his father and begged from him, for his hermit life, an island which in those days was quite uninhabited. O admirable religion of a son who could show himself to the sight and not to the recognition of a father! The King granted his request and made home to him the small island formerly called Bethney, now Stafford. More freely would he have given him wide territory. There the noble hermit laboured long in penance, and by his spiritual triumphs shone with many miracles. But when the King, the father of the revered hermit Bertellinus, had passed the natural bourne of all flesh, a great persecution began in those parts and a stranger took over the sway of the kingdom by the paramount authority of his royal resources. Now when he saw Bertellinus, the servant of God, dwelling pleasantly in a delectable place, he determined to eject him, though having so far regard for his holy calling as to set in motion against him not the force of arms but the rigour of the law. Bertellinus, in this urgent necessity, sought for the assistance of his relations and friends, but found his kin without confidence and his adversaries, rather than his comforters, sitting secretly with the princes to destroy the innocent, according to Solomon's word, 'The poor man is hateful to his kindred, but the friends of the rich are many.' Therefore he laid upon his kinsfolk a curse, that bore hard upon their decline and may be seen by plain tokens,^d not merely to the fourth and fifth generation, but even to the present day. How great were the fruits that his signal piety bore when, on his appearing in the King's court as defendant, he concealed his hereditary right and alleged only that of the late ruler's deed of gift.^e

^d Father Carnandet remarks in a foot-note, "What tokens! I think the author himself did not know, and that this imprecation is a pure invention on his part."

^e This other note follows:—"I can never believe that Bertellinus was so attached to his solitude as rather to fight for it than give it up. Nor do I think it less incredible that an angel should have appeared as Bertellinus' substitute in the fight."

"The litigation having at last reached a head, the parties were fain to decide the issue by single combat. Out upon the iniquity of this world ! While the King's power abided in fighters, no one, no not one, was found to be good to the poor man in Christ and humble. And so Bertellinus, full of grace and strength, prostrated himself in prayer, saying 'O God, come to my help. O Lord, make haste to help me. O Lord my God, in Thee have I hoped, save me from all those that persecute me and deliver me. I am made a stranger to my brethren, and there is no one to comfort me. Deliver me and put me by Thy side, and then let the hand of whosoever will fight against me.' When Bertellinus' prayer was ended he heard a voice that said, 'Fear not, beloved of Christ : the Lord has heard thy prayer, the Lord has accepted thy supplication.'

"On the morrow, when he had cast his trouble upon Him who will not allow the just to fall, he met with a dwarf (whom, as the sequel will show, I should rather call an archangelic power), with a golden hoe, who saluted Bertellinus, and said, 'Sir, here am I ready to defend your cause in the name of Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.' Bertellinus, comforted by divine grace, knowing that the Spirit bloweth where it listeth, and so, not dismayed at the insignificance of his champion's body, but remembering how the lad David slew ten thousand Philistines, not by strength of limb but by the grace of the Spirit, not forgetting, moreover, the philosopher's saw, 'Despise not the strength of a little body,' Bertellinus answered him and said, 'Friend, thou art welcome in the omnipotent grace of Christ ;' whereupon, giving thanks to God, the saintly servant of Jesus Christ entertained God's messenger with every care. At the stated hour he led him forth to the place appointed for combat ; and the crowd, looking back, beheld a fellow blacker than an Ethiop, more terrible than a giant, gnashing his teeth, and raging for the fight. But the messenger of God, a dwarf in body but in spirit an archangel, awaited his onslaught with a cheerful countenance. The dreadful giant, leaping forward with a roar as of a lion, threatened an assault of irresistible fierceness ; but the messenger of God was not afraid, and being by the grace of God unharmed by the other's blows, not by an exercise of the pugilistic art but by an infinite superiority of strength, took the great ruffian quietly and stretched him at his feet, crying and roaring out with a loud voice,

' Bertellinus, servant of God, have mercy upon me.' At this, if the by-standers were not all astonished it need astonish no one, when the smallest of men held the tallest in his power by force of angelic virtue ; neither was any there found mad enough to doubt that this was indeed a divine miracle. Wherefore all those present, except Bertellinus' kinsfolk, fell at his feet, saying, ' We have sinned, we have acted unjustly, we have worked iniquity : holy father have mercy upon us.' Bertellinus was next received most reverently by the King, and all that had previously been confiscated was restored to him by the monarch's own command. And all the inhabitants of the provinces, both men and women, feared God and loved Bertellinus in all things, reverencing him during his lifetime as their spiritual father.

ST. BERTELIN'S MIRACLES.

" But the saint of God, fearing temporal glory and honour, went away and roamed like a mountaineer over lonely heights, where, occupied with fasts and prayers, serving God with much watching and condemning the vanity of this world, he ended his life on September 9th. This is the servant whom his Lord found watchful, to whom he committed five talents and who gat him other five thereto, and entered into the kingdom of his Lord. This our lord Bertellinus showed forth admirably in his life and after his death much more admirably by many shining miracles at the place now called Stafford ; since the Lord, for love of the blessed Bertellinus, made the lame to walk, the dumb to speak, the deaf to hear, the blind to see, and vouchsafed to other sufferers the health which they desired, until the day when a murder was committed in the saint's very church."

The following paragraph is appended to Alexander's manuscript, but as it refers to matters 150 years after his time it may safely be concluded that it is " by another hand " :—" Now there was in the town of Stafford a certain man named Willmot, a cook by trade. This man had during many years, nearly sixteen, lost the sight of his eyes, so that he was unable to go abroad without a guide to go before him. At length, after many years had passed, he was led to the church of St. Bertellinus, in the town of Stafford itself, with the object of regaining his health. He was kneeling

in prayer before the saints' altar while the priest, whose name was Joannes Crostiis, was during mass presenting the Eucharist to our Almighty Father, and at that moment the blind man had his sight given back to him, the first thing he saw being that awful Sacrament, and so gave thanks to God on high, who for His love of St. Bertellinus had renewed the miracles of old. This miracle took place in the year of our Lord 1386. Let us therefore all implore the mercy of the Supremely Blessed, that he may, to the increase of the honour of the blessed Bertellinus the Confessor, and the confirmation of our faith and hope, vouchsafe to show forth his merits to us by his customary miracles, so that all men, worshipping him with devout hearts, may earn the reward of bodily and spiritual health, and, whatever their tribulations, may draw from them salutary effects as they implore the saint's help, by his merits and the intercession of his prayers, by the aid of Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen." Cardinal Newman, in his "Lives of the English Saints," remarks upon this story of Willmot that "its matter-of-fact tone curiously contrasts with the wild fable which goes immediately before it."

DR. PLOT'S SUGGESTION.

Lastly, in point of time, we give the following paragraph from Plot's "History of Staffordshire" (1689):—"A.D. 705. About this time the place or island on which the town of Stafford now stands, anciently called Bethnei, began first to be inhabited by St. Bertelline, son of a King of this country and scholar to St. Guthlac, with whom he tarried till his death. After which, though now unknown to his father, he begged this island of him, where he led a hermit's life for many years, till disturbed by some who envied his happiness, when he removed to some desert mountainous places where he ended his life, leaving Bethnei to others, who afterwards built it and called it Stafford, there being a shallow place in the river hereabout that could easily be passed with the help of a staff only." Dr. Plot, who had evidently seen extracts from Alexander's life of the saint, makes no pretensions to original research on this subject. He conjectures that the "desert mountainous places" may refer to Ilam, near Ashbourn, for there is the reputed shrine of St. Bertram, to whom the church is dedicated,

and whose name is supposed to be one of the numerous variants upon Bertelin.

CONFUSIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS.

The reader is now in possession of all that is most material in legend, tradition, and history regarding St. Bertelin. It is only too obvious that there are confusions and contradictions which it is now next to impossible to straighten out and reconcile. One source of perplexity to which no reference has hitherto been made arises out of the want of agreement among the early biographers as to St. Bertelin's feast day. Molanus, Wionius, Menardus, Bucelinus, Ferrarius, and Castellanus, all learned Continental hagiographers of the 16th and 17th centuries and all recognized as authorities by the compilers and editors of the "*Acta Sanctorum*," accept September 9 as the date, and expressly describe St. Bertelin as "of Bethnei, a town more recently known as Statford, in England." So also does Capgrave, an English writer, whose name is Latinized in the "*Acta*" to Capgravius. But John Wilson (1608) another English authority on the lives of the saints, gives the date as August 12, altering that in a second edition of his book, without explanation, to September 29. In the first edition he says under the date of August 12:—"At Stafford, in the same shire, the commemoration of St. Berteline Confessour, who descended of a noble British lynage in our iland, contemned the puddle and vanities of the world in the flower of his youth, and became an ermite for the love of God, leading a most strict and severe kind of life in the woods neere Stafford aforesaid, where in very great sanctity and holines of life he ended his blessed dayes, and finally reposed in our Lord. His body was afterwards brought to Stafford, and being there interred was wont, in ancient times, to be kept with very great veneration of the people of that province." In the later edition, however, published in 1640, he preferred the form Bertelline and moved his feast forward to September 29, adding "(The same day) at Stafford in the same shire, the commemoration of St. Bertelline Confessour, borne of a noble Brittish blood, who in the flower of his age, contemning the vanities of the world, became an ermite for the love of God, leading a strict and austere life in a forrest neere unto Stafford, where in all sanctity he reposed in our Lord. His body was very honourably

interred at Stafford, and there wont, in ancient tymes, to be kept with due veneration of the inhabitants." Father Carnandet suggests that the difference may have arisen from the fact that Wilson confused Bertelin of Bethnei with the monk of Croyland, whereas in the opinion of that scholar they were distinct personages.

WERE THE DISCIPLE OF GUTHLAC AND THE HERMIT OF BETHNEI IDENTICAL ?

That last is the most interesting point remaining to be dealt with, and the subject is discussed by the Jesuit Father with a degree of acuteness and candour which entitles him to respectful attention. We have already had the statement of Ingulph as to the burial of St. Bettelinus at Croyland and the destruction of his tomb by the Danes in 871, together with the tombs of St. Guthlac, St. Cissa, and St. Tatwine; and upon this Father Carnandet says, "This notice induces me to disbelieve altogether what Alexander has to say about Bettelmus' withdrawal to the wilds of Stafford after St. Guthlac's death, his solitary life there, and his final burial. For although Ingulph flourished 200 years after the Danish irruption of which he tells, yet he was much nearer to it than the writer of the 'Life'—nearer by a whole century if Alexander Essibiensis was that writer, or by 300 years and more if we ascribe the 'Life' and the miracles stated to have taken place in 1386 to one and the same author. Besides, as Ingulph was abbot of the monastery of Croyland he was in a position to obtain much better information than any stranger, both from ancient records and from tradition, about the history of his monastery. What then? Are we to say that no anchorite Bertelinus ever lived in Staffordshire, or was ever worshipped there? That I should not venture to assert definitely. As for his worship, it is rendered very certain by the adducement of martyrologies, registers, and old documents of that same county which are quoted by Wilson, and also from the biographer himself, or at least from him who wrote the account of the miracle already referred to, in which express mention is made of a church dedicated to St. Bertelinus. . . . As for what concerns the biographer [Alexander], although his work is worthless in many points, yet his testimony must not therefore be rejected when he speaks of the

worship of the saint and asserts that a church dedicated in his name existed in Stafford at the end of the 14th century. Rather it appears to me extremely probable that an account of the worship given to him by the people of Stafford induced the biographer either to make one Bertellinus out of two, or else to transfer the solitary of Croyland to the wilds of Stafford.

"I cannot, however, pass so favourable a judgment on the alleged residence and burial of a saint in the aforesaid county. For, seeing that the author of the 'Life' deliberately identifies Bertellinus, the hermit of Stafford, with the disciple of St. Guthlac, who, as we showed from Ingulph, died and was buried in Croyland, and that the antiquity and trustworthiness of the records adduced by Wilson is by no means above suspicion,⁷ I cannot help doubting whether any holy hermit of this name ever shed the lustre of his life and burial upon the county of Stafford. [It may be remarked here parenthetically that Cardinal Newman was of opinion that "the story of Ingulph and Bertelin's burial is not incompatible altogether with the legend which connects him with the town of Stafford."] The learned reader must choose what he prefers when the whole matter is so obscure; meanwhile pending more definite evidence, it seems to me most likely that the Bertellinus of Staffordshire is either a different man from the holy disciple of Guthlac, or if he is the same he was only worshipped in Stafford and did not die and was not buried there. The former view is taken by Michael Alford in the Index of Saints appended to vol. 3 of his 'Annals of the English Church,' where he says 'Bertelmus, or Bettelinus, a hermit, was the minister of St. Guthlac and was buried with him in Croyland church; his tomb was broken up by the Danes. . . . This saint differs from another Bertellinus, who is mentioned on September 29 in our (Anglican) roll of martyrs. He is recorded to have been of noble British blood, to have left all and followed a solitary life, and to have died in the Stafford district.' The Anglican Martyrology supports Alford (1) because Bertellinus date is there given not as 9th of September but as the 29th September, or the 12th of August; (2) because no mention is made of Guthlac's institution;

⁷ As Father Carnandet suggests a doubt as to the trustworthiness of Wilson, it is due to that old writer to say that not only did a church dedicated to St. Bertelin exist but that, as we have seen, there were ancient records relating thereto, the genuineness of which is beyond dispute.

(3) because the saint is said to have lived and died at Stafford, which agrees not at all with Ingulph's story.

"To this it may be answered that conceivably it is not the date of death but of some other festival which is meant by the Anglican Martyrology, the word used being not, as elsewhere, *depositis*, but *commemoratis*. It might therefore be that in that place some church was erected to him or some relics of him preserved, and so an annual celebration held in his memory, as is the custom with other saints elsewhere. [St. Thomas of Hereford, at one time Archdeacon of Stafford, is commemorated at the English College of St. Omer.] This becomes exceedingly probable here if Bertellinus, as his biographer has it, was a native of the county of Stafford. Two other arguments would have more weight if the antiquity of the records adduced by Wilson were above suspicion. But I fear that they are either the 'Life' itself or else compiled from it. Nor does it matter that he gives another day for Bertellinus' worship and has nothing about Guthlac: the first he can have learnt from the church registers, which he seems to mean by 'registra'; the second he may have purposely omitted, as it had nothing to do with the people of Stafford. I now proceed to the remaining points.

"The biographer makes our saint the son of a King of Stafford, whom he does not specify. Wilson, in the 'Martyrology,' is content with the 'noble British blood.' The first seems to me by no means probable; the second very little, if Bertellinus be identical with the disciple of St. Guthlac. The reason is that Felix, a chronicler contemporary with Guthlac, as we have said, must be held to have been entirely ignorant of this noble descent, as he makes no mention of it anywhere, even where there was the most obvious opportunity. . . . He adds that he exercised the office of barber to St. Guthlac's person. It is self-evident that it would have conduced not a little to enhancing the fame of St. Guthlac if a king's son had dedicated himself to him as disciple and servant, and that it would have been very germane to the biographer's matter to have mentioned the royal extraction of Bertellinus in this place at any rate; but he does so neither here nor elsewhere. Nor was Bertellinus so little known to Felix that he could be supposed unaware of his kingly birth, since he knew him not merely from report but by sight and word of mouth. This is clear from the passage in which he says, 'At that time

there dwelt with him [Guthlac] one brother, Beccelinus by name, to whose narrative we owe our description of the death of Guthlac, the man of God.' Besides this, he was acquainted with Cissa, the successor of Guthlac, as well as others who had had converse with Guthlac (and also with Beccelinus) for a considerable period; and as he learnt from these, on his own assertion in his prologue, of the acts of Guthlac, so he might have learnt also of the royal stock of Beccelinus. The royal condition of Beccelinus was equally unknown in Ingulph's time at the monastery of Croyland, as is plain from the words in section 8, in which Ingulph calls St. Cissa a man of noble birth and formerly of great authority in his worldly estate, but is content to refer to Beccelinus as 'the servant of the aforesaid father.' If, therefore, exalted descent is attributed to Beccelinus by his biographer, he must be distinguished from the disciple of Guthlac.

"What is said in the Life of Bertellinus about his flight to Ireland, his abduction of the King's daughter, her death and that of her child by the fangs of wolves is pure fable, or at any rate contaminated with fabulous elements. Fabulous, likewise, we may consider the foolish and ridiculous narrative" of the litigation and the dwarfish champion. "This kind of fable needs no refutation. However, lest the reader wonder why so legendary a 'Life' should have been put in print at all, he must know that this was only done that he might have a clear view by what right we have condemned it, and also that he might use his own judgment as to what can prudently be maintained with regard to the saint's royal descent and residence and burial at Stafford."

Before finally quitting this part of our subject we should like to submit what we will venture to describe as a novel and original suggestion contributed by the present writer's collaborator. He writes:—"I strongly suspect that we have in the early history of Ethelbald, King of the Mercians, a clue to the solution of much which is confusing and contradictory, and that there is possibly a germ of truth in the (reputed) statement of Felix. Leaving out the obviously imaginary, because supernatural, adornments, I see nothing incredible in the story. Assuming for the sake of argument the truth of the alleged royal parentage of Bertelin, the first difficulty that occurs to me is, what King could it have been who persecuted the hermit and wanted to turn him out of his cell? It may be presumed that the incident took place between 700 and 750,

but during that time the rulers of Mercia were professed Christians, the most vigorous being Ethelbald, who for twenty years had overlordship of the whole of Britain south of the Humber. He had one excellent reason for leaving Bertelin in peace—they were both old servants of St. Guthlac. This brings me to the second point: is it not possible that Alexander's legend has reference not to Bertelin, but to someone closely associated with him, with whom he has been confused? I think it is highly probable that the hero of the incident which formed the germ of the legend was none other than Ethelbald himself. We learn from ancient chronicles that among those who sought and shared Guthlac's retirement at Croyland was Ethelbald, a nephew of King Penda. He was the victim of King Coelred's hate, and when he approached his rightful kingdom he was driven off again and again, and returned each time to the little hut he had erected besides St. Guthlac's hermitage, where he was brought into daily contact with Bertelin. Thus we have (i) a man of royal blood; (ii) subjected to persecution and turned out of his rightful possessions; (iii) ministering to St. Guthlac; and (iv) the intimate companion of Bertelin; while (v) the man had many of the qualities of an anchorite and a saint. When in after years they both came to live in Staffordshire what more natural than that subsequent historians should have confused the two, ignorant, perhaps, that they were both in attendance on Guthlac at the same time?

"It may be objected that this theory, while explaining the ascription to Bertelin of a kingly descent, does not account for the imputation of youthful sin as evidenced in the story of the abduction of the woman. To my mind that narrative is surrounded by every circumstance of truth, and the story of the birth in the forest is so full of poignant tragedy and so unlike anything that would be invented by the well-meaning romancers of the period, that it must be carefully examined in the light of the suggestion that the prince and the saint were hopelessly confused by the chronicler. Unhappily for the reputation of Ethelbald, there is nothing in this story of the abduction inconsistent with what we know to have been the character of his curiously dual personality. The following extracts from a letter addressed by St. Boniface, an Englishman of Devon, to King Ethelbald, throw considerable light upon the private character of the erstwhile anchorite:—

* To Ethelbald, my dearest lord, and to be preferred to all other

Kings of the Angles in the love of Christ, Boniface the Archbishop, legate to Germany from the Church of Rome, wisheth perpetual health in Christ.

“ ‘We confess before God that when we hear of your prosperity, your faith, and your good works, we rejoice ; and if at any time we hear of any adversity befallen you, either in the chance of war or in the jeopardy of your soul, we are afflicted. We have heard that, devoted to almsgiving, you prohibit theft and rapine, are a lover of peace, and a defender of widows and of the poor ; and for this we give God thanks.

“ ‘Your contempt for lawful matrimony, were it for chastity’s sake, would be laudable ; but since you wallow in luxury and even in adultery with nuns it is disgraceful and damnable. It dims the brightness of your glory before God and man, and transforms you into an idolater, because you have polluted the temple of God. . . . Wherefore, my dearest son, shewing you good counsel, we call you to witness, and entreat you by the living God, and His Son Jesus Christ, and by the Holy Spirit, that you would recollect how fleeting is the present life, how short and momentary is the delight of the filthy flesh, and how ignominious for one whose existence is so transitory to leave a bad example to posterity. Begin, therefore to regulate your life by better habits, and correct the past errors of your youth, that you may have praise before men here and be blest with eternal glory hereafter.

“ ‘We wish your Highness health and proficiency in virtue.’

“ This fearless exhortation quickened the better side of Ethelbald’s nature, as may be seen by the following charter he granted just afterwards, about the year 749 :—

“ ‘I, Ethelbald, King of the Mercians, out of love to Heaven and regard to my own soul, have felt the necessity of considering how I may by good works set it free from every tie of sin. For since the Omnipotent God, through the greatness of His clemency, without any previous merit on my part, hath bestowed on me the sceptre of government, therefore I willingly repay him out of that which he hath given.

“ ‘On this account I grant, so long as I live, that all monasteries and churches of my kingdom shall be exempted from public taxes, works, and impositions, except the building of forts and bridges, from which none can be released. And, moreover, the servants

of God shall have perfect liberty in the produce of their woods and lands, and also the right of fishing, nor shall they bring presents either to King or Prince except voluntarily, but they shall serve God without molestation.' " And it was this Ethelbald who founded Croyland Abbey on the site of the hermit cells of Guthlac and his disciples.

HAS FATHER CARNANDET MADE OUT HIS CASE ?

This, then, is the evidence bearing upon the issue raised by Father Carnandet. We may regard that issue without trepidation, for it is not whether a pious monk named Bertelin settled in a hermitage at Bethnei (or more properly Bethney, which may be taken as meaning the house on the island), afterwards called Stafford, at the beginning of the 8th century, or not, for that is not in question ; but whether St. Bertelin was or was not identical with the Beccelin, or Bettelin, or Bertellinus who was the disciple and confidential friend of St. Guthlac of Croyland, who died in 714. The identification would of course increase our knowledge of and interest in St. Bertelin, but Stafford men may regard the issue after all as of secondary importance.

Has Father Carnandet made out his case as against Alexander Essebiensis ? Is it fact or fiction that Bertellinus of Croyland and Bertelin of Bethney were one and the same person ? We answer that question by adopting the commentator's own suggestion, "The learned reader must choose what he prefers when the whole matter is so obscure." The writer of this article anticipates a consensus of opinion amongst careful readers that Father Carnandet has succeeded. It is clear that those portions of Alexander's biography of which there is no trace in either Felix or Ingulphus are, as Father Carnandet says in one place, "fictitious in both substance and adjuncts." There is not the slightest evidence of the existence of any other authority on the subject after Ingulph ; and had Alexander had the good fortune to discover a manuscript written between the time of Felix and that of Ingulphus, or between Ingulphus' day and his own, he would certainly have been proud to mention the fact. Felix often puts a severe strain upon our credulity, and it fairly gives way in several instances. It seems to be impossible to pick up

any so-called historical work written in those "ages of faith" without being faced, as Carlyle says, with "a bewildering, inextricable jungle of delusions, confusions, falsehoods, and absurdities." It was just such fantastic stories as Alexander has to tell which the great Bishop Hooker had in mind when he wrote of "legends having grown to nothing else but heaps of frivolous and scandalous vanities that have been ever with disdain thrown out."

The utmost that can be said for the legendist is that the Church of his day taught the doctrine—or is reputed to have taught it—that the end justifies the means. It is observable that Alexander tries to give a moral turn to his fables, but even then he blunders stupidly, for he represents his godly hero as cursing his kinsfolk with a curse "that may be seen by plain tokens not merely to the fourth and fifth generation, but even to the present day;" that is to say, for more than 500 years. And all because they wanted to oust him from his hermitage of wattle and mud. Now the Jesuits are specially associated—whether fairly or otherwise is not the question here—with the immoral doctrine that the end justifies the means, but this is too much even for Father Carnandet: he contemptuously exclaims "What tokens? I think the author himself did not know and that this imprecation is a pure invention on his part."

Two other strong points of Father Carnandet are these: first, that neither Felix nor Ingulphus makes any mention of Stafford, for the statement in Felix' narrative, regarding the two youths who accompanied Guthlac from Repton to Croyland, "of whom one was the aforesaid Bertellinus, son of the King of the Stafford tribe," was actually interpolated by the unscrupulous Alexander; and, secondly, that Ingulph relates with circumstantiality the death of Bettelinus (as he calls him), his interment at Croyland alongside his master, Guthlac, and the subsequent desecration of their tombs and destruction of their remains by fire by Danish pirates, which incursion is a matter of history. So of the record of Alexander Essebiensis it may fairly be said that "it has all the inefficiency and incredibility of a mythological tale."

THE ANTIQUITY OF STAFFORD.

Coming at length to the evidence for the antiquity of Stafford, we have to remark first of all that the limit of 1,200 years precludes all connection of the place with Roman and pre-Roman times. There is no evidence whatever that the area now covered by the town of Stafford was occupied during the Roman dominion, though it lies only a few miles to the north of the great Watling Street road. If Bury Ring, two and a-half miles to the west of the town, is a pre-Roman earthwork (and the writer submits in another part of this volume some considerations in support of that view) it may be assumed that there was in the neighbourhood a sufficient population to justify the construction of that place of refuge, and the date may be anything between pre-historic times and the Saxon invasion early in the 6th century. As that is equivalent to saying that the moat might have been dug out by Neolithic man, we are warned off from enlarging on the subject in this place.

If Stafford originated early in the 8th century it is of course a Saxon town, as its name indicates. Compared with such place-names as "Birmingham" and "Uttoxeter," "Stafford" has undergone only slight changes; but the name has not been invariably so spelt. In the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" (891) and on some of the Anglo-Saxon coins minted at Stafford, the first syllable is sometimes spelt "Staeth," and in that case Staethford would signify a ford at which there was a small jetty or landing-stage.

EARLY IMPORTANCE OF THE TOWN.

Again: the fact that Stafford was selected as the county town when Mercia was parcelled out into shires and hundreds is evidence of great antiquity. It is sometimes rather loosely said that England was so divided by Alfred the Great, who died in the year 900, but that is questioned by high authorities. Dogmatism on the point is excluded, for in the case of Mercia even the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" is silent as to the agent by whom and the date at which this great civic reform was carried out. Green, in his "Conquest of England," says, "Into English Mercia

the shire can hardly have been introduced before the annexation of that district by Edward in 919, and as the few remaining years of that King are spent in warfare it probably dates from the days of Athelstan. I cannot agree with the suggestion that Alfred may have formed the shires of English Mercia. In that case, the bounds of the Mercian shires would correspond with the bounds of the Danelaw. This they do not do, which makes a date after the conquest of the Danelaw pretty certain." The present writer, after a somewhat careful search, has failed to find in ancient records any mention of a Mercian shire before A.D. 1000.^g On the other hand, several of the counties in Wessex and other parts of the south and west of England are referred to as counties as well as kingdoms in the "Anglo-Saxon Chronicle" as early as the 9th century. Stafford town is, however, mentioned in the "Chronicle" as in existence in 913, when the Lady Ethelfleda, wife of the Earl of Mercia and daughter of Alfred the Great, built a castle there. With very few exceptions, the chief towns of the Mercian shires are topographically central. Stafford is a case in point, but, unless it had importance as well as centrality to recommend it, it would scarcely have been preferred before Lichfield, which is nearly as central and had been the seat of a bishopric from the middle of the 7th century, and for a short time of an archbishopric.

THE CHURCH OF ST. BERTELIN.

It is therefore beyond dispute that Stafford was a town of relative importance early in the 10th century, but all that has so far been said, though not without relevance, still leaves a space of two centuries to be bridged over. For the materials with which to carry out that bit of literary engineering we turn yet once again to the sainted Bertelin. It is a fact of primary importance and interest that a Saxon church dedicated to St. Bertelin survived in Stafford until the beginning of the last century. It is mentioned several times in mediæval records. For example: In the Assize Roll of the 50th year of Henry III. (1272) we read "Agnes de Bakelyn put herself in the church of St. Bertelin of Stafford,

^g It is noteworthy that Giraldus Cambrensis in his "Itinerary Through Wales" (1188) never speaks of Welsh counties, and, indeed, we know that those counties, as we have them now, were not settled until the reigns of Henry VII. and VIII.

and confessed herself a robber before Bertram de Burgh, the coroner. Her chattels are worth 12d. Afterwards it was testified that the said chattels belonged to Robert the smith, of Stafford, through whose suit the said Agnes put herself in the church. The town of Stafford took her not, and is therefore in mercy." Another case of fleeing to the church of St. Bertelin for sanctuary occurred in the same year. "The jury of the borough of Stafford presented (*inter alia*) that Henry Brylestone and Sibilla de Assheburn, his wife, at the suit of Richard, son of Henry de Merston, took refuge within the church of St. Bertelin of Stafford, and acknowledged various robberies before the coroner and abjured the kingdom." In the 16th century the following memorandum appears in the Corporation records:—"32 Henry VIII. Mr. Bailiff Horne and Wm. Peyke acted for St. Bartram's church 8th of Octor." Dugdale, treating of Stafford in his "Baronage," says, "There was a guild of St. Bertelline with a church, wherein I found some buried, which is the present school, corruptly called St. Bartlemew's." In the reign of James I. there was litigation respecting the edifice. We also know that subsequently the old church was used as a place of assembly by the Common Council of the borough.

The exact date of the erection of this little church is not known, but it will be remembered that St. Mary's was a collegiate church in the time of King Edward the Confessor, who reigned from 1041 to 1066. There is reason to believe that the Norman church was similar in size and plan to the present; at all events, its breadth was the same, for a sufficient portion of the Norman west front remains to this day to testify to the fact. It is clear, therefore, that the noble edifice founded by a pious Saxon King, doubtless from designs by Norman architects, superseded, about the year 1050, the early Saxon church of St. Bertelin, though the necessity for so great a change in the size and character of the church, beyond the appointment of a dean and chapter, is not apparent. But for the Stafford men of the 10th and 11th centuries the little sanctuary had sacred and tender associations, for, unlike the vandals of the early part of the 19th century, they did not cart it away as so much rubbish, but left it under the sheltering wing of St. Mary's, with which imposing edifice it was connected by a doorway (the situation is still visible), and hereafter put it to various useful purposes.

CANONIZATION OF BERTELIN.

Let us now suppose, as we fairly may, that for a hundred and fifty years it had sufficed for the religious observances of the nascent town; that would make the date of its erection about 900. This brings us to another material fact; it was dedicated to St. Bertelin. Now the tradition is that the holy hermit settled down on an island called Bethnei or Bethney, and although it would not be correct to say that the Stafford of to-day stands upon an island, anyone who will ascend St. Mary's tower at flood-time will have no difficulty in coming to the conclusion that the swollen river and undrained swamps of those early days would justify the use of the word island. Tradition further saith that this settlement took place towards the end of the first decade of the 8th century, so that between the arrival of Bertelin and the building of the church there was possibly an interval of 200 years. Meanwhile, Bertelin had been canonized. The date of his canonization is not given in the "Acta Sanctorum" and probably could now only be discovered, if at all, by researches in the Vatican library; but whatever doubt may be thrown on some of the incidents of his career as narrated by mediæval writers, this is certain, that the Church of Rome does not canonize imaginary personages. The Papal authorities do not seem to be bound by any rigid rule as to the time which shall elapse between the death of a holy man or woman and the honouring of the memory of the same by canonization: much appears to depend upon the importance of the individual. Edward the Confessor and Thomas à Becket were raised to the dignity of saintship within a very few years of their death. In the case of Cardinal Borromeo the interval was 26 years, of Ignatius Loyola 66 years; but there are instances on record of comparatively obscure devotees in which the time was 250 years, while the proper authorities at Rome are in this very year of grace understood to be making up their minds as to whether or not they will canonize Joan of Arc, who was burnt at Rouen in 1431. There is nothing at all singular in the time which was allowed to lapse in the case of Bertelin, nor does it militate against the authenticity of the tradition. The existence of this pious hermit, his settlement at Bethney, now called Stafford, his canonization, the dedication of a church to his memory, and the survival of that church until the beginning of the 19th century may therefore, it is submitted, be accepted as historic facts. *Ergo*, Stafford can, if so disposed, boast of an antiquity of 1,200 years.

Light and Shade on Cannock Chase.

BY KARL CHERRY.

OUTSIDE Staffordshire itself, so much misconception exists as to the real character of the great Midland moorland of Cannock Chase that a few words on the subject from one to whom that moorland is something of a "sweet familiar" may tend to enlightenment.

It has been the writer's privilege to show the beauties of the Chase to many who were previously unaware of its charms. They came to scoff at coal and banks of slag and cinder; they left to pray for more of that wonderful heather-scented honey and for another glimpse of the banks whereon that heather grows. Coal and honey! The imagination recoils from an association so incongruous. Yet true it is that the hills and dales of Cannock Chase do sweep up to the very verge of the Black Country, ending as abruptly as does the sea against some barren cliffs. Indeed, in some respects these hills may be likened to gigantic ocean billows, and the far distant smoke almost suggests the spray of such rollers breaking over unseen rocks. The illusion, too, is heightened by the quality of the air, equalling as it does that of any ocean breeze in purity and health-renewing properties.

To state in bare figures that the Chase contains upwards of 25 square miles is to convey but a faint idea of the contrast afforded by such a sweep of open country after one has experienced the more cramped conditions of the neighbouring towns. For mile after mile the visitor may go plunging on into solitude more and more profound; into scenes ever changing in their tone and type of natural beauty.

As he enters into the silence and solitude of the moors the spirit of the place will appeal to him as it did to those anchorites who of old made the Chase their abode. He will be startled in spite of himself at the rush of some black-cock that rises explosively from the heather at his feet. He will find himself taking a fresh interest in the "bassooning bee" homeward bound to

some cottage hive. If he have a companion he will find his voice unconsciously lowered as though he were entering the vaulted stillness of some great cathedral.

As the traveller rests by "Hangman's Oak" near the head of the idyllic Sherbrook Valley he will realize how this great loneliness has in the past appealed to some whose intentions were less peaceable than those of the anchorite or student of nature. He may well find himself in imagination back in those turbulent times that ushered in the fourteenth century, when the hills, densely covered by forest trees, afforded an appropriate *mise en scène* for deeds of violence wrought, not by highway robbers, but by wealthy squires and lawless and arrogant nobles. Amid the solitude of these glades they fought out their feuds, and over the whole countryside established a state of anarchy that for well-nigh a century defied suppression. Even in the days of Henry VII. Cannock Chase was a centre of high-born anarchy, with no local Parliament—as in the case of Dartmoor—to suppress violence or to compensate the victims of outrage. Tixall Heath was the scene of a characteristic piece of lawlessness, if—that is—we are to credit a story preserved in family tradition.

For some generations there had been a good deal of secret antagonism between the Chetwynds of Ingestre and the ancient house of Stanley. Both Sir William Chetwynd and Sir Humphrey Stanley were of the household of the King, Sir William being a Gentleman Usher to his Majesty, and Sir Humphrey occupying the less distinguished post of a knight in the guard. To Sir Humphrey, the precedence accorded to his rival was a source of irritation that could only be removed by effacing that rival himself. To that end, so runs the story, he inveigled Chetwynd from his house by means of a bogus letter that purported to be an invitation to a neighbour's seat.

Sir William took the bait. Unattended he set out, and, when half-way across Tixall Heath, was speedily despatched by the swords of twenty armed men. The deed was perpetrated in the presence of Sir Humphrey Stanley, who gave it out that he happened to be passing as he was going a-hunting; Lady Chetwynd went a-begging—for the justice she never received.

So, also, were the Wrottesleys, Robert of Essington and his heirs, the Hilarys, and many others in constant conflict. Here they laid siege to each other's manors; drove off their enemies'

cattle; abducted the latter's womenkind, and in summary fashion put to death the prisoners that fell into their hands. Recalling such scenes, one no longer wonders at place-names so gruesomely suggestive as those of "Hangman's Oak" and "Dead Man's Grave." Memories such as these are, however, sadly out of harmony with the wayfarer's surroundings; better that he lay him down among the fern and bracken in sweet content with the world around him and the age into which he has been born. Let him drink in the chorus of a round dozen of larks, carolling above him, and the murmur of Sherbrook itself as it goes bubbling down the valley to which it gives its name. Then, should his soul still yearn after rapine, let him keep a sharp look-out for the golden eagle, for that beautiful marauder is not an entire stranger to the place.

When the visitor has become accustomed to the solitude of the Chase he will the more readily appreciate the wonderful variety of its scenery. Such spots as Sherbrook Valley, the valley of the Seven Springs, the Trent at Wolseley Bridge and at Essex Bridge, are well known, and have been painted scores of times for the Royal Academy and other exhibitions. Although these should be seen—indeed, must be seen to be appreciated—he should not let convention lead him thither by the nose. The beauties of these and other show places "compose" so naturally that it would be almost criminal in the professional artist to pass them by. The Chase affords, however, a hundred views that, for reasons technical or otherwise, cannot be committed readily to the painter's canvas. Therefore, let another plunge be made through the tangled undergrowth of heather, fern, golden gorse, and omnipresent bilberry; through the long alley-ways of silver birch, whose delicate grace throws into splendid contrast the rugged grandeur of forest oaks. Here, framed by these mighty boles, and these great out-thrusting branches that must surely end in clenched and massive fists, one finds a series of vignettes that would have rejoiced the heart of Constable. On the horizon, the faint purple of the distant Weaver Hills; in the middle distance, the Vale of Trent luxuriant in half-a-hundred varying shades of green; in the foreground, all this wealth of foliage leaping into definition and manifold variety in the woods of Shugborough; and all around, the purple glory of the Chase itself bathed in a flood of sunshine more magically golden by contrast with the surrounding woodland shade. The stranger may

feast his eyes on such views as this, and then, if he have the mind, may hark him back to the antiquities of the Chase.

In his ramble he will not infrequently and unexpectedly come across ancient "barrows" or funeral mounds. One of the most interesting of these will be found close to the entrance to Sherbrook Valley on the Milford side of the old Roman cart track. The opening of this "bury" afforded a remarkable instance of the confirmation of oral tradition by modern research. Such tradition had from time immemorial described the Milford "bury" as the grave of three Kings slain in a great battle fought on the spot. At the base of the mound were found three separate and distinct layers of human bones, all showing the action of fire and surrounded by a few coarse fragments of ancient British pottery. As confirmatory of the tradition, it is of course noteworthy that no other remains were found, and that apparently no previous disturbance of the tumulus had taken place.

Here those three warriors found "the sleep that lies among the lonely hills," and lay undisturbed as the centuries rolled by. An old wives' tale alone kept their memory green; a heather-covered wayside mound alone marked the place where they fell. Surely there is some compensation here for battle, murder, and sudden death. From all such evils we may well pray for deliverance; but if such were to be the end it were restful to the soul to picture some such spot as this wherein to lie. Then might the children make nosegays of wild flowers gathered from our grave and, of winter nights, tell afresh to their children's children the story they themselves had had from their fathers before them.

We find evidence, too, of an antiquity more remote even than that of the Milford "bury." In many parts of the Chase the visitor may well be puzzled by the presence of rounded granite boulders; puzzled, since granite does not enter into the geology of the Chase. One such boulder near Cannock Church sorely perplexed the county historian Erdeswick, who, writing in 1593, was obliged to let its origin and significance remain a mystery. Thanks to the labours of Mr. H. G. Mantle and the late Dr. Crosskey, of Birmingham, the mystery has now been solved.

As we rest upon one of these boulders, thus separated by many miles from its native bed, the imagination will fashion yet another picture of Cannock Chase. As far as human history is

concerned, that boulder takes us straight away into the Back of Beyond : to the time when the Chase was the bed of an Arctic sea. Over that sea there floated icebergs detached from the glaciers of what is now the Lake District, of the Arenigs, near Bala, and of the Criffel mountains of Galloway. On one of these icebergs this glacial boulder was carried. Its icy cradle slowly melted and the rock itself plunged to the bottom of the sea. Then the ocean gradually receded ; forest trees appeared where sea-weed had been wont to wave, and a wild race of men made this forest their home. As centuries passed, while the legions of all-conquering Rome were as yet unknown in the land, these savages gradually evolved for themselves a religion and ordained an Arch-Druid to preside over its rites. And among these very hills, so tradition has it, this High Priest had his abode.

Such was the childhood of Cannock Chase. After a turbulent middle life, during which much that men speak of as English history was transacted amid its glades, the grand moorland has settled down into staid old age. But she still has a kindly welcome for all of us moderns who come to her to renew health and take a fresh lease of the joy of life.

No attempt has been made here to set forth in detail all the natural beauties and relics of antiquity that await the explorer of the Chase. It has been assumed that he has eyes to see and such knowledge of his country's past as will give him an understanding heart. If he have these, then he will be well repaid by the most casual visit to "great Arden's eldest child."

Bury Ring, near Stafford: Pre- or Post-Roman?

BY J. L. CHERRY.

AT a conference of archæological societies held in 1901 a committee was appointed to prepare a scheme for a systematic record of ancient defensive earthworks and fortified enclosures. It was proposed that defensive works be classified, so far as might be, under the following heads:—

- A. Fortresses partly inaccessible, by reason of precipices, cliffs, or water, additionally defended by artificial banks or walls.
- B. Fortresses on hill-tops with artificial defences, *following the natural line of the hill*;
Or, though usually on high ground, less dependent on natural slopes for protection.
- C. Rectangular or other simple enclosures, including forts and towns of the Romano-British period.
- D. Forts consisting only of a mount with encircling ditch or fosse.
- E. Fortified mounts, either artificial or partly natural, with traces of an attached court or bailey, or of two or more such courts.
- F. Homestead moats, such as abound in some lowland districts, consisting of simple enclosures formed into artificial islands by water moats.
- G. Works which fall under none of these headings.

THE NAME: ITS ORIGIN AND SIGNIFICANCE.

Bury Ring, the subject of this paper, comes under the heading D. Its name is Saxon. "Bury" is one of many derivatives from "burh," which signifies a place of refuge, a shelter; and before we enter on the wider field of enquiry we may linger for a few moments in the bypath of verbal archæology. Whether

the derivatives of "burh" be "bury" or "burg" or "borough" or "burrow" or "barrow" or "borrow," they all have the same meaning, and some of them have been used interchangeably. To define "borough" as a town having a corporation (as Johnson does), is insufficient, for in most cases places named "Bury" or having "bury" as a suffix, were originally so called because they were fortified places of refuge. To shelter and protect the remains of the dead until "the trumpet shall sound" we "bury" them. Says Carlyle's hero in "Sartor Resartus," "the tomb is now my inexpugnable fortress; yet a little while and we shall all meet there, and our Mother's bosom will screen us all." Sir William Temple towards the close of the 17th century wrote, "Possession of land was the original right of election among the commons, and burrows were entitled to sit as they were possessed of certain tracts." Nathaniel Grew, one of the earliest members of the Royal Society and a contemporary of Temple, gives us, "It is his nature to dig himself buries as the coneys do," while Sir Thomas Browne, instead of speaking of a "barrow," in the sense of a sepulchral mound, says he saw "as many as seven borrows on Salisbury plain." Rabbit-burrow speaks for itself, but it is not so generally known that the leeward side of a hedge is a "burrow;" that a hurdle with plaited straw for the protection of lambs is a burrow-hurdle; that Carlyle, who in such a matter was a law unto himself, says "burrow themselves" when ordinary mortals would write "bury;" that it is good old English to say "the mind is shut up in the borough of the body;" that "men use houses, hills, and such like to burrow or shelter from the north wind." "Bury" is sometimes applied in old documents to moated homesteads, of which there are instances at Littywood, Acton Trussell, Chartley, Coppenhall, Haughton, Rodbaston, Pillaton, and Sandon, all in the Stafford district. Finally, on this point, a homely illustration will occur to some of our readers: within a few miles of Stafford is a picturesque spot bearing the not over-picturesque name of Tinkerburrow. Local printers will have it that this should be spelt Tinkerborough: they are not positively wrong, because, as we have seen, both words had the same meaning originally; but the little recesses scooped out of the soft red sandstone were surely the work of travelling tinkers, or were compassionately made as shelters for them and their friend Autolycus, that "snapper up of unconsidered trifles."

DESCRIPTION OF THE EARTHWORK.

But to our theme: Bury Ring occupies a slight elevation above the surrounding country, about a mile beyond Stafford Castle. The area is seven acres, and the fort is irregular in outline. Inside, its length is 250 yards and its greatest width 158 yards. The moat is in some places 30 feet deep, but it is not continuous round the entire area. There was an entrance gate at either end, and the land on which these gateways stood has never been disturbed. We hope to show that this fact is of considerable significance in relation to the age in which the work was constructed; for although, as we have seen, Bury Ring bears a Saxon name it by no means follows that its builders were Saxon.

Principal Windle, F.R.S., says, "It is very dangerous to lay down laws about matters which have been so imperfectly investigated at present. Perhaps one may venture to surmise that there were three classes of earthworks more or less overlapping one another [in their periods]: there was the strongly fortified hill camp intended as a place of resort in an emergency, but not as a place of habitation. It was a place to which the inhabitants of the valleys betook themselves, with their families and their herds, when attacked [or threatened] by enemies, but a place reserved for such occasions; and perhaps, on account of its bleakness or want of water, unsuitable and unintended for any protracted occupation. Then there was the village, surrounded by low banks and ditches, of little use for purposes of defence, but subserving other ends; and, finally, there was a third class where, because the local climate, the water supply, and the general topographical conditions were favourable, the town was also a camp, and served the purposes both of habitation and a fortress. The term 'British camp' should be dropped as misleading and that of 'pre-Roman earthwork' adopted, since it commits us to less than the other, for there can be little doubt that in this country, as certainly in France, some of these works were originally constructed in the Neolithic age. It is generally recognised by investigators that it is impossible to assign any date, in an ordinary chronological manner, to the beginning of the Neolithic period; ten thousand years has been surmised by some authorities, and that may be taken for what it is worth. The most trustworthy

data as to age are those derived from objects obtained by excavation, and even then we are faced with difficulties arising out of the occupation on the same site by different races. Old Sarum, for example, which was probably pre-Roman in its inception, was certainly afterwards a Roman fortress, a Saxon burh, a Norman stronghold, and a Mediæval city." (William of Malmesbury actually refers to old Sarum as Scarburh, or rock fort.) This condition of things may also be illustrated by an instance much nearer home. If Bury Bank, near Stone, was pre-Roman, as we are inclined to believe, it was also the site of a "palace" built by Wulphere, the notable King of Mercia, at the end of the 7th century, and excavations might therefore bring to light both British and Saxon remains.

PRE-ROMAN OR POST-ROMAN ?

We take it that Bury Ring is one of the emergency strongholds described by Principal Windle. It is well known that the chief distinction between pre-Roman and Roman earthworks is, that the former are almost invariably irregular in their outlines, which follow the natural conformation of the plots selected, while the ground plans of the Roman camps are nearly all rectangular or circular. This rule is so constant and the exceptions are so few as to make out a *primâ facie* case for the greater antiquity of Bury Ring, and that case is supported by the fact, already mentioned, that the moat is not carried completely round the site, but a road has been left as an annexe to the gateway. It is surely obvious that had the original designers of Bury Ring known how to bridge a moat by means of a lift-bridge or a sliding platform they would have encircled the camp with a moat that was perfect and unbroken, for the steep inner face of a continuous moat would not only have added greatly to the garrison's power of resistance but would have been especially serviceable at the gateways; whereas, with the gateways standing on the same level in relation to both the garrison and the attacking force they would be so much the weakest part of the defence as to invite the assailants to avoid the stiff climb and deliver their assault on the gateways. It seems to us perfectly clear that had the defenders known of any method of spanning an unbroken moat by a movable bridge both moat and bridge would have been

adopted. The inference therefore is, that this earthwork was constructed by a people who did not know how to make a sliding platform nor a lift-bridge, and therefore were compelled to leave the ground undisturbed at the gateways.

Waiving aside, though not absolutely ignoring, the speculation about Neolithic man, we are forced to the conclusion that the camp has an antiquity of at least 2,000 years and was the work of the tribe whom it is convenient to call Ancient Britons, that is to say, the Brits who came over from either Gaul or what we now call Central Germany about 300 years B.C.—the people who occupied the south and midland portions of the island when Julius Cæsar invaded the country in 55 B.C. and the Emperor Claudius in the 43rd year of our era. We know very little about this tribe, and for that little we are indebted to Pytheas, a contemporary of Aristotle and a clever navigator who twice conducted expeditions to Britain on behalf of certain merchants of Massilia (now Marseilles) about 340 B.C., and to brief notices by Tacitus, Strabo, and Ostorius. It is not necessary to our purpose to go into minute details regarding them: it is sufficient to say that they were savages of a type similar to that of the New Zealanders of fifty or sixty years ago, before they were taken in hand by Bishop Selwyn, excepting that the Brits, while accustomed to offer human sacrifices are not proved to have been cannibals, as were some of the neighbouring tribes to the north of them. What is material to our purpose is that beyond some slabs of unhewn stone standing upon rude uprights on Dartmoor streams, and supposed to be the work of Ancient Britons, there is no evidence whatever that these ancestors of our fellow-citizens of the Principality had the slightest idea of making a bridge. It is possible they may have thrown trees across rivers, and that is all. An esteemed correspondent sends us the following note bearing upon this subject:—"Out of 237 plans of British earthworks examined at your request, in no single instance have I found a ditch completely surrounding the area or unbroken at the entrance. I think, therefore, you are justified in concluding that the contrivance of the drawbridge was quite unknown to the Ancient Briton. This belief is strengthened by a consideration of the huge ramparts at Maiden Castle, Dorset. This is probably a very late British work, thrown up to oppose Vespasian, by whom it was carried in person. Formidable though the labyrinthine entrance would prove, it is obvious

that the simplest form of sliding platform or drawbridge would not only have saved the enormous labour entailed in raising these ramparts to a height of 60 or 70 feet, but would have been far more effectual as a means of defence. Cæsar, in his 'Commentaries,' distinctly says that the gates were impeded by the trunks of trees, so that the defenders must have had at hand material for the construction of bridges. He describes these facts minutely, and the great commander who condescended to note what the Britons had for breakfast, would not have omitted reference to drawbridges had they existed." But it is well to bear in mind that even the highly-civilized Romans did not build an arch bridge before 170 B.C., and that there is not a single reference to a bridge in the Bible—facts which permit us to discount the significance of Celtic ignorance.

Now let us regard in the light of these facts and considerations the proposition that Bury Ring and other similar works in Staffordshire are of Saxon origin. For four hundred years the Romans were a civilizing power in this country. Unlike the Saxons, who harried the Britons with fire and sword and stayed not their hands until they had forced them back into their mountain fastnesses, the Romans lived among the people whom they conquered and their laws and influence were on the whole beneficent. When the Romans withdrew from the island, is it conceivable that the people whom they left behind knew nothing about bridge-making, or that the new conquerors were as ignorant as the Britons at the beginning of the Christian era, and were so dull and stupid as to be unable to copy the scientifically constructed earthworks with which the Romans had studded the country? We submit that it is not conceivable. By the 8th century the Anglo-Saxons were so eager in the matter of bridge-building as to suggest that they were anxious to make up for lost time. We learn from an ancient Saxon work on the duties of their clergy that the latter were urged by the authorities to impose on their penitents the task of building bridges as a penance; and Ethelbald, King of Mercia, by a charter, relieved the clergy from taxation, but expressly excepted the taxes levied for the building of bridges.

THE CONCLUSION UPON THE ARGUMENTS.

The conclusion of the whole matter is therefore that Bury Ring is a pre-Roman work and possibly a pre-historic work, which might throw its date of origin back into the dim and distant past before the British settlement.

A SUGGESTION.

Seeing how strong a presumption there is in favour of the pre-Roman origin of Bury Ring, it surely follows that the time has arrived for testing the accuracy of the conclusions herein submitted by means of carefully superintended excavations. We suggest that Lord Stafford's representatives be approached with a view to obtaining his lordship's sanction to the opening of the ground by a committee of the North Staffordshire Field Club.

Some Saints of Staffordshire.

BY KARL CHERRY.

IT has become the fashion with a certain school of historians to treat the early saints of our land as persons whose lust for power and for monastic wealth was as ignoble as their credulity was contemptible. We are told that such of them as happened to be laymen were fanatics, on whom canonisation was conferred as a reward for their liberality to lazy monks and fat monasteries.

It behoves us first to examine these charges, and to learn whether, in our brief companionship with the Saints of Staffordshire, we have to deal with self-seeking charlatans or with self-sacrificing heroes; with men who degraded their religion, or, on the contrary, who gave to Western Christianity that impulse to which she owes her present place and power.

If these critics are right, then we shall expect to find, enrolled in the Calendar, many names which, in point of fact, are absent therefrom. Ethelbald, whose charter gave protection to the faithful, and whose riches gave fresh means of usefulness to the Faith; Edgar, to whom more than forty monasteries owed their existence; Wulfruna, the saintly benefactor of Wolverhampton—where are the names of these? In the case of the last-named there seems no reason why the honour should not have been conferred; but in that of the others we do know that their private life was not free from taint. The early Church, impulsive though she may have been in her hero-worship, did not direct prayers to be addressed to those who might be standing in need of her own. *Requiescat in pace* was the most she could give to the memories of these dual personalities who, at times, had striven so hard after righteousness.

Were they fanatics? We are to see what was the effect of their "fanaticism" upon hearts that were inflamed with lust of blood and with animal desire

By their example and persistent precept the ferocity of their countrymen was mitigated, reverence for women was quickened, and a new ideal was awakened by a new conception of social obligations—the ideal of the home. And, to anyone who realises what the Saxon had been, it is amazing to observe how quickly his regeneration came to pass.

Historians are agreed that the Saxon invaders of Britain were the most bloodthirsty, ruthless, and depraved tribe that ever inhabited Europe. "Their theology recognised no sin but cowardice, and revered no virtue but courage." If, by any chance, the life of a captive was spared, it was as a favour that he was consigned to perpetual slavery. The most elementary natural affections were extinguished in a shower of blood, and family ties were sacrificed to the demands of avarice and lust: incest was rife among them, and they sold into slavery on the Continent not only their own countrymen, captured in private feud, but the wife and children of their own households. One Saxon queen acted as a procuress of Saxon maidens for continental nobles; and, when children became too hungry or too numerous, infanticide was considered the natural and obvious remedy. Their gods were monstrous reflections of themselves, to be appeased only by human sacrifices. Their heaven was to be an elysium of unending debauchery, wherein the prospect of swilling ale from the skull of an enemy filled the soul of the Saxon with present bliss.

That, then, was the raw material with which the Saints of Staffordshire had to deal; and, what is even more important, that was the material from which those Saints were, themselves, evolved in the course of a century and a half. Surely, it needed something of fanaticism to drive into the hearts of such as these the elementary but revolutionary notions of Christianity. We may sympathise almost with Charlemagne when he determined that their kinsmen on the Continent should receive either Christ or the sword.

Were they credulous? Credulity is a purely relative term, and the point where belief ends and credulity begins depends entirely upon the knowledge of natural causes possessed by an individual, a nation, or a Church. These old-time saints had no knowledge whatsoever of natural science. They lived in an age when the whole of Christendom accepted as a fact the daily occurrence of miracles. Their sole literature was comprised in the Bible,

the Missal, and the miracle-ridden lives of the early Fathers. Not the Christian alone, but everyone believed he was surrounded by spirits who influenced for good or evil the most trivial occurrences of his life. Is it surprising that their biographies have been embroidered with much that is crude and childish? Ought we not to be surprised rather by the exquisite beauty of many of these reputed miracles, and by the truth of their symbolism, typifying, as it often did, eternal and spiritual experience? Personally, I doubt whether the Anglo-Saxon saint was half so truly credulous as the modern American, who has banished from his elementary schools all books of fable and of faëry, the while he nourishes his soul on the products of a lying and pestilential press. And at its worst the credulity of the pious saint was preferable to the cruelty of the pagan savage.

SS. WULFHAD AND RUFIN.

The subject of St. Bertelin has been considered so exhaustively in a previous Study that, in our imaginary pilgrimage through the county, we will pass by his cell on the banks of the Sow. We shall not, however, have to leave "the woods near Stafford," for we are going to Darlaston, and in Mercian days, there was probably no break in the swampy forest between the two places.

Here, on Bury Bank, Wulfhere the king had built him a "palace" wherein was raised a veritable brood of saints. Fierce and masterful though Wulfhere was, his was not the dominant influence in his household; Ermenhilda, daughter of St. Sexburga, reigned here as queen. To have converted to Christianity a ruler so turbulent and headstrong as her husband was no small achievement; and although he lapsed from the Faith, still, through her influence, he not only renewed his vows but kept them, and helped her to carry out the great work of her life. This was the extirpation from his kingdom of the last remnants of Saxon paganism; and her success must have afforded her some consolation for a State marriage that had debarred her from the quietude of the cloister.

The disappointment caused by Wulfhere's temporary apostasy was softened by the more earnest attitude of her children. In her daughter, Werburga, she beheld a replica of herself; in her sons Wulfhad and Rufin, an eager curiosity concerning the Christ,

a curiosity that was fated to cost her dear. For soon there came the awful tragedy of her life. The murder of her sons was followed by the maniacal confession of Wulfhere's evil genius, the despicable Werbode. Then came the panic-stricken remorse of the once self-sufficient monarch, his death, and in the end the convent where always she had longed to be.

It was her mother's convent, and here she ended her days, gladdened by the knowledge that, through her influence, that withered home now stood in the midst of a Christian, peaceable, and contented people.

Mention of the murder of Ermenhilda's sons brings us to the account of SS. Wulfhad and Rufin, the victims of that tragedy.

The story of the deed cannot now be traced back beyond the latter part of the twelfth century. The Latin narrative, however, preserved in the "Monasticon" of Peterborough, is so circumstantial that it is not unreasonable to infer that it was based upon a record much more ancient, if not actually contemporary with the murder itself. Furthermore, we find that at that time Wulfhad was already invoked as a saint. This fact has been established beyond all doubt by the discovery of a hymn invoking his protection. It is written on a fly-leaf of a MS. in the Bodleian Library (Bodley MSS. No. 343), and experts are agreed that the handwriting is that of the twelfth century. It reads as follows:—

Gaude stirpe regia insignita Mercia,
In te, dum egregia fiunt sacrificia,
Pater sumit gladium, jam strues paratur,
Wilfadius, pro Isaac agnus ymolatur,
Wiferus, alter Abraham, ascen[dit] in montem,
Parcit prior filio, ferit hic insontem.
Regnum spernis, in supernans regnans gloriose.
Nos tuere martir vere Dei preciose.

In the following lines I have tried to convey an idea of the *motif* of this ancient and interesting hymn:—

Hail, bruised stem of Mercia's kingly tree !
 Already is the pile prepared for thee.
 While Sacrifice Supreme is being made,
 On thee thy father draws his ruthless blade.
 Instead of Isaac, thou the lamb to kill,
 For this new Abraham who climbs the hill.
 Earth's pomp is dross ; eternal glory thine !
 Guard us, and cherish us, Martyr divine !

At one time the story could be read, inscribed in verse beneath the cloister windows at Peterborough ; but more detailed is the Latin account in the " Monasticon."

At his baptism, Wulfhere had solemnly vowed to destroy the idols in his kingdom, and he renewed the pledge at the altar when he married Ermenhilda. But in the distraction of war and in the pleasures of the chase God was forgotten, and even his own sons remained unbaptised. His daughter, Werburga, though long dedicated to Christ, was an object of desire to Werbode, a pagan of ill-repute, and the chief counsellor in the court of the King, a man of mean birth and the chief amongst the idolaters of Mercia.

When Werbode sought Werburga's hand in marriage, the King was pleased, his sons were furious, and the Queen distracted. The young men threatened him with instant death did he presume to offend again. All of which did Werbode receive with meekness and resignation, content in his heart to bide his time. He had lost ground ; but he still had the ear of the King.

It came to pass one day, while Chad was praying by a stream near his cell, that a hart, with quivering limbs and breathless from the chase, plunged into the water before the eyes of the compassionate saint. And Chad sheltered it, and placed a rope about its neck, and led it into the forest to graze.

Hardly had he returned than Wulfhad, heated and disordered, approached him, asking whither the beast had fled. " Am I the keeper of the hart ? " asked the holy man, making play upon his words. " Yet, through this ministry of the hart, have I become the guide of thy salvation. The hart bathing in the fountain foreshadoweth for thee the laver of holy baptism. For, saith the text : ' As the hart panteth after the water-brooks, so panteth my soul after thee, O God.' To which Wulfhad made answer :

"The things you tell me would be more likely to work faith in me if the hart were to appear in answer to your prayer."

Then did Chad prostrate himself in prayer, and the thicket stirred, and, behold, the hart was standing before them. And the saint instructed Wulfhad, and anon baptised him.

Wulfhad betook him home and told his brother Rufin that he had become a Christian. "I, also," said the other, "have long wished for baptism. I will go seek holy Chad."

Werbode, however, had made himself privy to all that was afoot. Wherefore, he sought out the King and told him that the young men had become Christians, and were at that moment worshipping with the man called Chad.

Then the King in anger set out for the cell; but Ermenhilda implored Werbode to hasten away and warn her sons of their father's approach. This he promised to do; but contented himself with one glance through the window of the oratory, returning to Wulfhere to report that his sons obstinately refused to abandon their religion.

Wulfhere, pale with anger, burst into the oratory, and commanded them to renounce at once the Christ; but Wulfhad answered him that they had no wish to break the laws, or to lose the fatherly affection of one who himself had once accepted Christianity; but that no torture that he could devise would turn them from Christ.

Upon which the King straightway struck off his head.

Rufin, who seems to have been emotional and impulsive, while lacking the moral fibre of his brother, turned and fled. His father, however, pursued him and at Burston, near Sandon, so the story says, slew him also.

The sequel is Greek tragedy. Werbode was siezed with madness on the spot, and in his raving published abroad the story of his crime. The King fell dangerously ill, and when he recovered his bodily health St. Chad alone could minister to his despondency. So, at least, urged Ermenhilda, and at last, broken and penitent, he sought out the man of God.

St. Chad was singing the Mass, and Wulfhere dared not approach until he had been shriven by the saint. St. Chad, however, knew what the King desired, and raising the figure, prostrate at the door, heard his confession and bade him go root out idolatry from the land.

Ermenhilda caused the bodies to be buried at Stone. It has been said that the place-name commemorates the great pile of stones the Queen erected over the grave, stones that she used afterwards in the building of her nunnery at Stone. She also built, it is said, a chapel at Burston on the spot where Rufin was slain.

In after years the procurator of the nunnery at Stone obtained from the Pope the formal canonisation of the two princes, and the head of Wulfhad was enshrined in the church of St. Lawrence at Viterbo.

ST. WERBURGA.

When King Wulfhere, broken with remorse, turned to the consolations of religion, one woman there was, in addition to Ermenhilda, ready to strengthen him in his resolve. This was St. Werburga, his daughter, who, in the end, wrung from him permission to take the veil. The rite was performed at Ely in the presence of the King himself, the royal abbess, Etheldreda, and many bishops and nobles. She was still at Ely when news was brought that her father was dead, and that her uncle, the pious Ethelred, reigned in his place.

After the lapse of several years, the king bestowed on her a sort of travelling commission to superintend all the nunneries in his kingdom. The work was congenial, for she seems to have had a liking for discipline—or, at least, for its exercise and maintenance—and before long the houses under her control became models of monastic rule.

Through the king's liberality she founded religious houses at Trentham (in Staffordshire, and not, *pace* Mr. Baring Gould, in Gloucestershire), at Hanbury in the same county, and at Weedon in Northamptonshire. And it was through her influence and initiative that Ethelred founded at Chester the collegiate church of St. John the Baptist, and presented to St. Egwin the ground for the abbey at Evesham.

If Werburga, in her capacity as spiritual adjutant-general to Mercia, was strict in exacting obedience to discipline, she by no means spared herself in the exercise of ascetic abstinence and mystic self-mortifications. Her physical hunger was appeased

by only one meal a day, and her time was largely devoted to satisfying her craving for exhausting and painful prayer. She would remain in church all night and would recite daily, in addition to the usual monastic offices, the whole of the Psalter, remaining on her knees, it is said, until the labour of love was done. To my unchastened mind it seems that she might have been much more usefully employed ; but the story is probably a pious exaggeration. Were any woman to remain on her knees while she recited the whole of the Psalter, she would probably suffer from *bursitis patellæ* so acutely as to prevent her kneeling at all.

St. Werburga lived to an advanced age and then, like St. Chad and others, experienced a premonition of her end. She therefore retired to Trentham where she passed away peacefully on the third of February, 699.

Her body, at her own request, was taken to the monastery she had founded at Hanbury, where it remained until the year 708. It was then disinterred in the presence of Coelred, the King of Mercia, and was carried to Chester. In the course of time there was erected over the relics a stately church, which ultimately became the cathedral we know to-day.

In a record for the year 1180, we read of her relics being carried through Chester in order to quell a raging fire which had baffled all ordinary methods of extinction. During the reign of Henry VIII. the shrine was desecrated and the relics scattered abroad. What remained of the shrine was converted into the throne that is used by the bishops of Chester at the present day. It is adorned with sculptures of the Kings of Mercia ; but probably the fabric was not erected until the close of the 15th century.

ST. SEXWULF.

The year 675 was memorable in the history of the see of Lichfield. Archbishop Theodore was resolved that the unwieldy diocese, occupying the whole of Mercia, should be subdivided ; Winfrid, the bishop, was resolved that things should remain as they were. Theodore was not the man to brook opposition, and in the year 675 he formally deposed Winfrid from the see. In his place he appointed another of our Saints of Staffordshire, St. Sexwulf.

Sexwulf founded the great abbey of Medeshampstead (now Peterborough), and his extraordinary activities throughout the whole of the diocese earned for him the honour of canonisation. And, in truth, the episcopacy in those days was even less of a sinecure than it is to-day.

First and foremost, it was obligatory that many hours, both by day and night, should be spent in prayer. Again, every man trained to the priesthood was compelled to practice some kind of manual labour. This was a duty imposed on the priest while supervising his village flock, and on the bishops whilst governing a diocese more than one third the size of England. Some of the clergy, following the example of St. Paul, followed the more humble crafts; others, more cultivated, enriched their altars with chalices and patens wrought in precious metals, and added to their libraries manuscripts embellished with exquisitely finished illuminations. St. Dunstan, for example, worked in all the metals and was, moreover, a maker of church bells and organs. St. Wilfrid wrote the four Gospels in letters of gold on a purple ground, and presented them to the church at Ripon. In the days of Sexwulf, "the dignity of labour" was something more than a political catchword.

He spent much time in teaching and almsgiving, and more still, of course, in the administration of the diocese. Furthermore, he was an exalted member of the judiciary. To travellers of all nations and to the ecclesiastic with a grievance he was by law directed to consider himself "a kinsman and a protector," a phrase which exactly epitomises the revolution that Christianity had wrought in the national conscience. It was no empty phrase. When Rochester was destroyed by the Danes, the bishop of that place sought refuge with Sexwulf who at once found him a church at Hereford. He took, as I have said, an active part in the administration of the law, and diligently attended the chief courts of justice in his diocese, more especially the half-yearly shire-motes, where, by virtue of his office, he presided over the bench of ealdormen. Here his superior education enabled him to instruct the ignorant, and his episcopal authority helped to control the passionate and prejudiced; more important still, it checked the besetting tendency of litigants to appeal to the pagan practices of their forefathers.

His sacred calling gave him power also to arbitrate over family feuds and to put an end to domestic strife. That is always a

thankless task ; and it says much for Sexwulf's force of character that, far from making enemies, he inspired that warmest and most revering form of affection that could express itself only in the rite of canonisation.

ST. KENELM.

In St. Sexwulf we have seen the personification, as it were, of the claim made by the Church to protect the widow and fatherless, and all those who are in any way afflicted or distressed. In the canonisation of our next Saint we recognise the beautiful complement of that sentiment, namely, the full, loving, and grateful appreciation by the Christian Church of its indebtedness to the unconscious ministry of Childhood. The cruelty of the infanticide has given place to the Cult of the Child.

St. Kenelm was the son of Kenulph, King of Mercia, and was only seven years of age when, in the year 819, he succeeded to the throne. The child's sister, the Princess Quendreda, was appointed as his guardian. Quendreda aspired to the throne, and she would have made a worthy mate for one of the wicked uncles in that pathetic and possibly Anglo-Saxon drama, "The Babes in the Wood." Very cautiously she sounded her co-guardian, Askbert, who promptly consented to "remove" the child at once.

At Clent, in Staffordshire, there is a meadow called "cowbach," and thither, under pretence of going a-hunting, Askbert enticed his little sovereign. At last, the child, tired out with the heat of the day, fell asleep beneath a tree ; whereupon, Askbert began to dig a grave. The child, however, woke and, according to the legend, exclaimed, "It is in vain that you think to kill me here ; I shall be slain in another spot, in token whereof," and he thrust a stick into the ground, "behold, see this rod blossom." Askbert, quite undaunted by this display of the miraculous (a fact that mars the artistic value of the story by its inconsistency with human nature) took the boy at his word, led him to another spot, beheaded him, and buried the body in a thicket.

The legend that ascribes the finding of the body to the guidance of a ray of heavenly light is neither instructive nor suggestive. The real significance of St. Kenelm lies for us not in the manner of his death, or in the fantastic circumstances of the recovery of

his body, but in the fact that a child should have been canonised at all by a race so recently rescued from barbarism. A chapel occupies the site where the child was murdered, and formerly a statue of a crowned child adorned one of the walls.

ST. MODWENNA.

Nearly two centuries before St. Kenelm met his death at Clent, a saintly and strong-minded woman was presiding over a convent in Ireland. This was Modwenna, one whose name cannot be omitted from any account of the Saints of Staffordshire. Not only was her association with the county greatly beneficent, but it has given rise to a series of biographies so hopelessly muddled, and so full of anachronisms as to serve as a warning to future investigators. More especially, as we shall see, should the student avoid taking on trust the unsupported statements of either Capgrave or Dugdale.

While Modwenna was employed in her Irish convent, Alfrid was studying in her country. This prince has actually been confounded with Alfred the Great; but in reality he was the illegitimate son of Oswy, King of Northumbria. The time came for this young man to return to his own country, and the Irish King wished to make him a present. Finding, however, that his treasury was empty, the King blithely commanded one of his courtiers to go rob some church or convent and return with the proceeds, that he, the King, might speed the parting guest in a manner befitting his estate.

The convent selected by the nobleman was that which was governed by Modwenna, and it was pillaged in a manner worthy of the most cherished traditions of the race. That race was, and is, a fearless race; and Modwenna was the daughter of a king. All undaunted by the turbulence of wintry seas, by the prospect of intercourse with indifferent or hostile strangers, and by the peril in which she was placing her reputation, she followed Alfrid across the water and across Northumbria, until she came upon him at Strenshall. Now, where was this Strenshall?

In a paper in the *Archæological Journal*, Mr. Syer Cumming cites Bishop Tanner as his authority for placing Streanshall, or Strenshall, in the Forest of Arden in South Staffordshire. According

to him Strenshall seems to have been the place 'where Modwenna built a monastery at the beginning of the ninth century,' or, in other words, when she had reached the mature wisdom of her two hundredth birthday. As St. Modwenna belonged to the order of St. Benedict and not to that of Methuselah, the statement seems to demand some verification.

Mr. Baring-Gould, in his entertaining life of Robert Stephen Hawker, has traced the origin of Tanner's blunder. Tanner copied from Dugdale; Dugdale copied from Capgrave; and Capgrave copied from an earlier life by Conchubran, the prime offender in this biographical muddle. He lived at the end of the thirteenth century, and he himself had access to an Irish life of *Monyinna* of Newry, who received the veil from St. Patrick and died about the year 518, or more than half a century before St. Modwenna was born.

Conchubran, familiar with the fame of the Staffordshire Modwenna, assumed that the two Saints were one and the same person, with the result that Modwenna is shewn to have lived through two complete centuries!

Having committed himself to so much, Conchubran, ignorant of the real locality of Streanshall, placed it in Staffordshire, and his reckless guess has been perpetuated to the present day.

The question that one naturally asks is, What was Prince Alfrid of Northumbria doing in the Forest of Arden in Mercia? And by what right could he bestow on the saint lands belonging to the King of Mercia? These objections are my own; the reply to them is Mr. Baring-Gould's. What really happened was this: the saint found the Prince, not in Staffordshire, but at Streonshale or Streanshalch, which was the ancient name of Whitby in Yorkshire. That place did not receive its present name until after its destruction by the Danes in 876, and after a new and *white* town had arisen on its ruins. Here, then, it was that Alfrid made restitution to Modwenna, and here he placed her in the famous double monastery that had been founded by St. Hilda.

It was while returning from a pilgrimage to Rome that St. Modwenna established herself in Staffordshire, and it was with Burton-on-Trent that the Saint was especially associated. Here she undoubtedly founded the monastery which in after years became so powerful and renowned; but even in this connection her biographers have blundered. Camden, who copied from

Capgrave's version of the enterprising Conchubran, wrote that at Burton, "[She] lived, retired, in an island called Andredsy where she was buried." It is true that for some time she did live in St. Andrew's Isle and founded a religious house near Scealcliff or Sealscliff. Seals do not disport themselves in the Trent, and Andredsy is the modern Ardrossan, near Saltcoats.

The Staffordshire monastery founded by Modwenna was great from its birth, and formed the nucleus of the powerful Abbey of Burton that was established in 1004. In the Book of Abingdon we read:—"A servant of King Ethelred, named Ulfic Spot, built the abbey at Burton, and gave it all his paternal estate worth £700, and, that the ratification of this gift might stand he gave King Ethelred 300 mancs of gold, to each bishop 5 mancs, and to Alfric, Archbishop of Canterbury, over and above, the town of Dumbleton."

According to Mr. Baring-Gould, Modwenna died at Longfortin in Ireland; but here that investigator is himself in error. Her remains were translated to Burton from Scotland, and that it was in Scotland she died is made plain by the quaint epitaph that was inscribed over her shrine at Burton:—

Ortum Modwennie dat Hibernia, Scotia finem,
Anglia dat tumulum, dat Deus astra poli.
Prima dedit vitam, sed mortem terra secunda,
Et terram terræ tertia terra dedit.
Aufert Lanfortin quam terra Conallæ profert,
Felix Burtonium virginis ossa tenet.

Of these lines, Gough, the editor of Camden, supplied the following English version:—

Ireland gave Modwen birth, England a grave,
As Scotland death, and God her soul shall save.
The first land life, the second death did give,
The third in earth her earthy parts receive.
Lanfortin takes whom Connel's country owns,
And happy Burton holds the virgin's bones.

It will be seen, however, that in translating the third and fourth lines Gough had forgotten that the exigencies of rhyme

had previously led him to transpose the order of the countries named, a curious slip that has not, I believe, been previously noted.

Another interesting vestige of Modwenna was described in the *Gentleman's Magazine* for December, 1789. It is contained in an account of Pilaton Hall, near Penkridge, and the whole letter is so interesting, and the early volumes of the periodical are so difficult of access, that it may not perhaps seem too discursive to quote the letter in full :—

"This ancient mansion, called Pilaton Hall, has been the residence for many generations of the respectable family of the Littleton Baronets; at present it is occupied, in part only, by a farmer, the worthy descendant, Sir Edward Littleton, having erected a new habitation at Tiddesley Park. . . . Pilaton Hall, it is said, will soon be so far demolished as to reduce it to a mere farm-house. Plot, in his history of Staffordshire has given several views of gentleman's seats; but I do not recollect Pilaton. Perhaps this hint may induce someone near the spot to effect a drawing before its alteration or total demolition. A verbal description would convey no just idea of the beauty and grandeur of the place; a summary account shall therefore only be given, abstracted from more particular notes. The hall, which is spacious, fills the mind with those fixed ideas we entertain of ancient hospitality, the lengthened oaken table, strongly supported, having carried many a load of substantial food, and exhilarating, healthful liquor; the arched stone chimney where logs of solid oak have cheerfully blazed and the butler's pantry, are all standing marks of convivial mirth and good cheer. The wainscot in carved panels, the projecting heads with long beards and jocund faces, plainly announce the spirit and disposition of those times; but it seems that all this was tempered with wisdom, prudence, and morality, for over the great chimney I perceived these words, JESU MARCY, the letters not Gothic, but formed of flowers and scroll-work.

"The windows are at this day [1789] filled with painted glass, and consist of subjects from the Old and New Testament, designations of the twelve calendar months, representing the produce and various employments of each season, and over them, in distinct compartments, the twelve signs of the Zodiac; these are comprised in circular panes. Others of the same form appear to be composed of emblematical devices, not easily understood,

one of them being especially remarkable, representing a man crowned, and sitting in the stocks.

"There are many more detached pieces dispersed in the windows of the house, but I shall confine myself to one only, which is near the kitchen, and was translated thither, no doubt, from the chapel, which is now in ruins, together with all the rest that are upon religious subjects. The drawing is an exact facsimile [reproduced in the Magazine], the saint's veil being black with a yellow border, curiously embroidered, the dress in beautiful colours with ermine. Underneath are these words:

Sto Medwynna ora p. me.

Below this on the dexter side, a group of male figures kneeling and praying; on the left, the same number of females in the like attitude, all of them with frontals or bandeaus around the head. The name being preserved, there can be no mistake; without so sure a mark it might have remained unknown."

WULFRUNA.

In our pilgrimage through this veritable Garden of Saints it is not a far cry from Pilaton to Wolverhampton. Mr. Cuming, to whose paper I have already referred, speaks of the priory of Wolverhampton as having been *founded* by Wulfruna. She did not do that; but she gave the religious house so vigorous a stimulus by her own endowments, and by her influence over "her highborn kinsmen," that, although she was never canonised, she is deserving of some mention among the saints.

The belief that Wulfruna actually founded the priory at Wolverhampton is very widespread, and her biographers and the historians of the town, copying one from the other, are largely responsible for its acceptance.

Long before her time, however, there stood on the "Hill of Hantune," then surrounded by forest, a temple of Pagan origin, a rude structure built probably of timber and wattle, thatched with reeds. Under the influence of a regenerate Wulfhere, it was adapted for Christian worship, and a church or monastery was established here, certainly many years before 996. In that year,

or in the year following, the house received a rich endowment from Wulfruna, the widow of the Earl of Northampton.

We learn of the existence of an earlier church from the *privilegium* of Archbishop Sigefric on the subject of Wulfruna's gift. In this document, he not only recapitulates her own donations, but describes and confirms the benefactions made to the church in former days.

Wulfruna's endowment provided for the maintenance of a dean and several secular canons. Great privileges were conferred upon the priory: It was exempt from the jurisdiction of the bishop of the diocese, and was subject only to the supreme authority of the king. In 1054 Edward the Confessor raised it to the dignity of a royal free chapel, with all the immunities attaching to the feudal privileges of "sac and soc."

Wulfruna was the only daughter of Edmund I., and therefore the sister of King Edgar, whom she strongly influenced on behalf of the priory and the town that now, though in a contracted form, bears her name.

ST. CHAD.

In this procession of Saints, the place of honour, at the last, has been reserved for him who was the greatest of them all, and whose memory is imperishably preserved in the ecclesiastical history of the county.

Lichfield Cathedral has been truly called the most beautiful of the cathedrals. It lacks, of course, the impressive immensity of York Minster, the massive grandeur of Lincoln, and those thrilling associations with historic crises that belong to Exeter. Still, for pure Madonna-like beauty, for grace and dignity of line combined with perfection in its proportions, Lichfield is unsurpassed by any cathedral in England. In like manner the Saint who first ruled as bishop of the diocese shines out among the other local saints "*velut inter ignes luna minores*," transcending them all—not in majesty of circumstance, not in his association with the destiny of a dynasty, but in "the modest stillness and humility" of his personal character. He was spiritually "the most beautiful" of the Saints of Staffordshire.

St. Chad—for, of course, it is of him that I speak—was the youngest of four brothers. Of these, mention must be made of Cedd

because he has been frequently confused, with his brother, the subject of our present Study, Ceadda or Chad. Mr. Baring-Gould, for instance, although he draws attention to the danger of confusing the two, when he comes to deal with St. Etheldred falls into the identical mistake himself. The confusion is the more excusable because their names were very similar, they both were ordained priests, they both became bishops, Chad of Lichfield and Cedd of London, and they both were ultimately canonised.

Nothing is known of either the date or place of St. Chad's birth. Dempster claims him as a Scottish saint, and Colgan as an Irish; but it is almost certain that he was an Angle, a native of Northumbria, and born probably about the year 620.

From Aidan, the sainted abbot of Lindisfarne on Holy Island, the young priest imbibed a love of sacred letters and of the contemplative habit of mind—a habit of self-detachment which is the very opposite of that morbid introspection with which it is so often confused. Monastic mysticism is not necessarily morbid melancholia; that is sufficiently evident in the character of this saint, who in the blitheness of his temperament and in his sympathy with the lower animals approached more nearly to the type of St. Francis of Assisi than did any other English saint.

On the death of Aidan, St. Chad journeyed to Ireland, where he devoted himself to good works and to the cultivation of holiness. Here, too, he came under the influence of the Anglo-Saxon nobleman, St. Egbert, who at that time was a voluntary exile in Ireland. By him St. Chad was reconciled to that thorny path of asceticism he ever afterwards followed; and, what is infinitely more important, was fired by him with the fervour of a Christian missionary.

St. Chad remained in his Irish monastery (now Melfort) until 664, when his brother Cedd on his death-bed appointed him abbot of the monastery of Lastingham. Thus Bede; but Alban Butler, without quoting any authority, says that he was appointed on Cedd's promotion to the bishopric of London.

In 666 the see of York became vacant. The King of Northumbria had first appointed St. Wilfrid, and had sent him into France to be consecrated. The priest, however, remained so long abroad that the king lost patience, and appointed Chad in his place. When Theodore, the militant archbishop of Canterbury, visited the diocese, he objected to the form, or rather to the lack of form,

of St. Chad's consecration, and declared in favour of the absentee, Wilfrid. To which decision St. Chad answered, "If you judge that I have not duly received the episcopal ordination, I willingly resign this charge, having never thought myself worthy of it, but which, however unworthy, I submitted to undertake in obedience."

So impressed was the primate by this display of humility, that he supplied certain rites which, as he considered, had been wanting from the original consecration.

In 669, on the death of Jaruman, bishop of the Mercians, Theodore refused to consecrate a new bishop of Mercia, but ordered Chad to take over charge. This he did, and for the first time in history the government of the diocese was fixed at Lichfield.

St. Chad brought to his new duties the same spirit of prayer, humility, and self-sacrifice as had distinguished his work in Northumbria. Here, as in the northern district, he made his visitations on foot. He did not wait for the poor and outcast to come to him, but himself sought them out, baptising them, consoling them, and strengthening them, and even feeding them; and all this he did with the self-effacement of an obscure parish priest. To him, the pomp and circumstance of episcopacy were hateful, and he was never so entirely in his element as when, in the open fields or in hovels of mud and wattle, he exalted his office by abasing himself. Then he would return to Lichfield, and in congenial companionship enjoy the only luxury he allowed himself—the privilege of worshipping God in the society of the chosen few whom he had settled in a religious house near his own church.

His huge diocese stretched from the banks of Severn to the German Ocean, but to the very end he made all his missionary pilgrimages on foot, displaying in every undertaking "a zealous love of pious toil." That phrase of Bede expresses in a highly-compressed form the most striking characteristic of the Saint—work for work's sake.

As I have just hinted, the literary quality of Bede's work is of no mean order; and in no place does his prose exhibit a simpler grandeur or a more austere dignity than in his account of the death of St. Chad:—

"When he had most gloriously governed the Church in that province two and a half years in the dispensation of the Most High Judge, there came round the time of which Ecclesiastes speaks: 'There is a time to cast stones and a time to gather them together,'

for a deadly sickness, sent from heaven, came upon the place, to transfer by the death of the flesh the living stones of the Church from their earthly abodes to their heavenly building. And after many of the church of that most reverend prelate had been taken out of the flesh, his hour also drew near wherein he was to pass out of this world to our Lord.

"It happened that one day Oswini, a monk of great merit, was busy labouring alone near the oratory, where the bishop was praying, the other monks having gone to the church. This monk, I say, heard the voices of persons singing most sweetly, and rejoicing, and appearing to descend from heaven. He heard the voice approaching from the South-East until it came to the roof of the oratory where the bishop was, and, entering there, filled the same and all about it. After a time he perceived the same song of joy return heavenwards the same way it came, and with sweetness inexpressible. Presently the bishop opened the window of the oratory, and, making a noise with his hand, ordered him to ask the seven brethren who were in the church to come to him at once.

"When they were come, he first admonished them to preserve the virtue of peace among themselves and towards all the faithful, and to practice without ceasing the rules of regular discipline which they had either been taught by him, had seen him observe, or had noticed in the words or actions of the former fathers. Then he added that the day of his death was at hand. 'That amiable guest' said he 'who was wont to visit our brethren has vouchsafed to come to me also to-day, and to call me from this world. Return, therefore, to the church and speak to the brethren, that they in their prayers do commend to the Lord my passing, and that they be careful to provide for their own, the hour whereof is uncertain, by watching, by prayer, and by good works.'

"When they, having received his blessing, had gone away in sorrow, Oswini returned alone, and, casting himself on the ground, prayed the bishop to tell him what the song of joy was which he had heard coming to the oratory. The bishop, bidding him conceal what he had heard until after his death, said, 'They were angelic spirits who came to call me to my heavenly reward, which I have always longed after; and they promised they would return after seven days and take me away from hence.'

"His languishing sickness increasing daily, on the seventh day, when he had prepared for death by receiving the Body and

Blood of our Lord, his soul being delivered from the prison of the body, the angels, as may justly be believed, attending him, he departed to the joys of heaven."

We may easily believe that St. Chad did experience a premonition of his end. The story of the heavenly voices, however, and of the prophecy with its fulfilment, is without doubt an addition, made very probably by Oswini himself. St. Chad, whose great characteristic was his humility, would not have spoken with such confidence of his "heavenly reward." What is more fatal to the credibility of the story is the injunction, said to have been made by the saint, that Oswini should conceal what he had heard until after St. Chad's death. There was no conceivable reason why such concealment should be made; but there was very good reason why, when the brethren after their master's death came to inquire into the occurrence, Oswini should thus account for his otherwise inexplicable silence. We may lay it down as a general rule that wherever this or any similar injunction is given to the recipients of an alleged prophecy, that prophecy belongs to the *post hoc* variety of forecasting. This consideration, however, does not detract from the beauty or significance of Bede's narrative. Its beauty is obvious; its significance lies in the evidence it affords us of the hold that the saint's personality had taken on the imagination of his disciples.

THE RELICS OF ST. CHAD.

The story of the relics of St. Chad resolves itself into two phases: the public history, recorded in the episcopal chronicles of the diocese, and the secret history, covering the period that elapsed after the desecration of the shrine in the reign of Henry VIII. This later chapter has fortunately been preserved for us in the records of the Jesuit College of St. Aloysius and, later, of St. Chad. First, however, mention must be made of the memorials of St. Chad.

No fewer than thirty-one churches have been dedicated to his honour in various parts of what was once his diocese. Holy wells both at Lichfield and in London bear his name, and Chadwell, one source of the New River, is possibly a corruption of Chadswell. In the burial-ground of Chadshunt in Warwickshire there formerly

stood an ancient oratory dedicated to the saint and containing an image of him. To this place and to a holy well near by, also dedicated to his memory, numerous pilgrimages and offerings were made in by-gone days. No original writings of St. Chad remain ; but a MS. in the library of Lichfield Cathedral is known as St. Chad's Gospels. It contains several marginal notes from which we learn that the volume was purchased by Gelhi the son of Arihtuid from one Cingal, in exchange for Gelhi's best horse, and by him dedicated to God and St. Teilo. From another note we learn that Godwin, the son of Earwig, publicly cleared himself from the charge of unchastity brought against him by Bishop Leofgar. Now, since the bishop died in 1021, the MS. cannot be of later date than the beginning of the eleventh century, and Professor Westwood considered that it belonged to the ninth or possibly even to the eighth century. It contains the Gospel according to St. Matthew and St. Mark, and a portion of St. Luke's version. Again, in the Bodleian Library there is an Anglo-Saxon homily written for the feast-day of St. Chad. It is written in the Mid-Anglian dialect used in the district between Lichfield and Peterborough. Finally, amongst the memorials of the Saint, we must mention the well-known and deservedly celebrated Anglican public school, Denstone College, which is also dedicated to the honour and in memory of St. Chad.

According to Bede, the remains were first buried in St. Mary's Church at Lichfield, and afterwards translated to St. Peter's, when that building was completed. The shrine, he tells us, was a wooden chest or tabernacle, "made like a little house, covered, and having a hole in the wall, through which those that go there for devotion usually put their hand and take out some of the dust, which they put into water and give to sick cattle and men to drink, upon which they are presently eased of their infirmity and restored to health." It is, therefore, not improbable that through this custom of mixing the dust with water, the saint in after years obtained, owing to an association of ideas, the character of patron saint of medicinal springs.

From the tomb at St. Peter's, the relics were removed to the cathedral when the latter was rebuilt and dedicated to St. Mary and St. Chad. Bishop Langton expended £2,000 on the beautiful shrine he erected in the Lady Chapel, which was the last resting-place the bones obtained within the precincts. Although Henry

VIII. spared the fabric of the shrine, the Catholics thought it expedient to remove some at least of the relics, and this brings us to the secret history of the bones, as set forth in certain Jesuit records.

The first document is entitled: "*A relation of how six of the greater bones of St. Chad came into my hands. Written by Father Peter Turner and Father William Atkins, Missionary Priests of the Society of Jesus.*" From this declaration we gather that on the eighth of September, 1615, Father Turner was summoned to the death-bed of Henry Hodsheeds of Woodsaton, near Sedgley. After he had performed the last rites of the Church, the priest recited the Litany of the Saints, the while the dying man exclaimed repeatedly, "Holy Saint Chad, pray for me!" The Father's curiosity being aroused, he asked why his penitent so particularly invoked St. Chad. Hodsheeds replied, "St. Chad is present yonder on the upper part of the bed [*i.e.*, the tester of the bed]; this is a treasure which I wish to be guarded with great honour, and therefore I give it to you."

The priest received the relics, wrapped in black buckram, and placed them in a wooden box, which he duly sealed. Then he asked the dying man how he had obtained possession of the bones.

He was told that at the time of the Reformation a certain Prebendary Dudley took away the bones from the shrine in Lichfield Cathedral, and entrusted them to two noble kinswomen of his own, who lived at Russell House [near Worcester] close to Lord Dudley's country seat. On the death of the prebendary, the ladies became alarmed by the rigour of the laws, and divided the relics between their neighbours, Henry and William Hodsheed, two brothers with whom they were on friendly terms. Subsequently, as we have seen, Henry's share came into the possession of Father Peter Turner, and in 1652 these were inspected by the English Provincial of the Jesuits, by whom they were approved, and Father Turner's statement was entered among the local archives.

The story is now continued by Father Atkins. This William Atkins was arrested, some years afterwards, in connection with the Titus Oates Plot, and died in his cell in Stafford gaol. On the death of Father Turner in 1655 the relics were deposited with John Leveson. He, I fancy, must have been the Leveson mentioned in another record as keeping a school in Wolverhampton.

Father Atkins concludes his statement with the following declaration :—

"The box in which these relics were deposited was broken open by the soldiers and others, and one bone, being dashed against the pavement, broke into two parts, on the Feast of St. Andrew, 1658, in the house of Father Leveson. Those impious men carried off with them a part of the relics.

"I, William Atkins, on March 2, 1664, removed these sacred relics from the box, which the soldiers had broken, into another box, lined with silk."

The statements of both these Fathers are preserved by the Fitzherbert family at Swinnerton Hall. To them is appended an attestation by the Rector of St. Omer's, dated January 20th, 1667. He declares that, being Visitor of the Residence of St. Chad, he removed from a box in the possession of a certain noble Catholic a small portion of St. Chad's relics to be exposed to public veneration in the English Seminary of St. Omer's.

At that time the relics were at Mr. Fitzherbert's house, Black Ladies, where they were in the custody of Father Collingwood. After his death they were removed to Mr. Fitzherbert's house at Swinnerton; but before this happened, two other Jesuit fathers had helped themselves from the sacred shrine. Father Anthony Terill, Rector of Liège, took away a bone for veneration in his college chapel, and Father Richard Strange, Rector of Gant, asserts that he brought "several relics" of St. Chad out of England for veneration in Flanders. What became of the rest?

Shortly before the opening of the Catholic Cathedral at Birmingham, a key was found at Swinnerton Hall. To this was attached a label stating that the key would open a chest, in which the relics of St. Chad had been placed, and that the chest had been removed for greater security from Swinnerton to Aston Hall. Search was made at Aston Hall, and the chest containing the relics was found.

From Aston they were taken to St. Chad's Church at Birmingham in June, 1841. Here they still remain and receive public veneration, that ceremony having been licensed by Pope Gregory XVI. in a Rescript dated May 17th, 1841.

AN APOLOGIA.

Thus in our companionship with the Saints of Staffordshire we have indeed journeyed far—from St. Bertelin's reed-thatched cell of mud and wattle, hidden in the forest of Stafford, to the temple that rises almost from the pavement of "the long, unlovely street" in modern, manufacturing Birmingham.

To whatsoever power Christians owe their obedience, be it to Rome, to Canterbury, or to Conscience, they surely cannot fail to realise what the lives of these sainted men and women have meant for modern England. Those records stand for something more than glowing examples of isolated and individual sanctity. It is the fact of these Saints having been appreciated by the people, an appreciation that has reached its extreme limit in adoration, that gives them their chief interest to students of English civilisation. For, just as the character of a man may be known by the company he keeps, so the ideals of a race may be gauged by the qualities exhibited in the objects of its adoration. Men do not worship what they do not admire. The Anglo-Saxons recognised in these Saints certain attributes they were bound to admire, and we must infer that these qualities had now become the ideals of the race. Instead of anarchy and the tyranny of might over right—a Sexwulf; instead of foul traffic in maidenhood—an Ermenhilda; instead of the courage that knew only how to fight for Self—a Wulfhad, who knew how to die for God; instead of the arrogance and cruelty of the conqueror—a Chad; instead of infanticide—a Kenelm.

And so this brief Study has been something more than the biography of our local Saints; it has given us a glimpse of the spiritual development of their earliest biographers. Crude and childish that stage in their religious history may have been; but it was never ignoble. To deride the childish fancies of these early Christians were as indecent as to poke fun at a little child who, having watched the sun disappear, exclaimed, "God has gone to bed and put out the light." We may smile, but in the presence of childhood we must not sneer. Soon the child will learn that "He, watching over Israel, slumbereth not nor sleeps." He may learn, too, that sometimes in the childhood of a race it has pleased Him to turn the lights very low indeed, lest His children be dazzled by the light of a Knowledge greater than they could endure.

Boscobel Literature: Some Recent Finds.

By J. L. CHERRY.

THE story of the flight of Charles II. after the battle of Worcester and his ultimate escape to France is generally regarded as one of the most romantic in English History. It has an abiding interest for each succeeding generation, and not least because the adventures have been fully and vividly described by King Charles himself. The events also afforded a theme for several pamphleteers, chief among whom was Thomas Blount, whose *brochures* were published within a year or two of the Restoration, and the works of nearly all these Restoration chroniclers were edited in 1831 by that scholarly compiler Joseph Hughes. In quite recent years Mr. Allan Fea has placed under an obligation all interested in the later Stuart period. By his untiring assiduity in collecting new materials, by his masterly arrangement of narratives both old and new, and by his generous use of informing illustrations he has illuminated the whole *mise en scène* and the figure of the principal performer. These fascinating volumes constitute an abundant harvest; but a humble gleaner has followed and has picked up a few ears some of which seem hitherto to have escaped the notice of this the keenest modern observer. At all events the matters to which allusion is here made are not mentioned by Mr. Fea, or otherwise the writer would have had no excuse for including them in this article, or, indeed, for returning to the subject at all.

There is a touch of the wonderful with which Charles's adventures are invested even in the history of the tracts in which those adventures are described. The King's own story was dictated by his Majesty to Mr. Samuel Pepys, the famous diarist, in 1680, or nearly thirty years after the fight and flight. The original document, which is in shorthand, was included in the library which Pepys bequeathed to the University of Cambridge, and it was not printed until the year 1766, when it was transcribed, and published

by Sir David Dalrymple, better remembered as Lord Hailes, an eminent judge and historian, and a friend of Dr. Johnson. There is something mystifying, if not exactly romantic, about Blount's narrative, which might have been called an authorized version, for among the State Papers for August, 1660-1, is the following memorandum: "It is the King's pleasure that Thomas Blount, author of 'Boscobel,' continue to perfect that history of his wonderful preservation after the Battle of Worcester, and that all persons instrumental therein give him information of the particulars, also that none but he presume to print any part thereof." But in 1662 the King caused it to be announced that a little book named "Boscobel" had errors in it and was therefore not a perfectly trustworthy account of his Majesty's deliverance. It seems to have been taken for granted up to that time that Mr. Thomas Blount, a Royalist, a Roman Catholic, and a member of the Inner Temple, wrote "Boscobel," but he disclaimed the authorship with emphasis and desired that the rumour ascribing it to him should be contradicted. It is possible there were two persons of the same name. Among other tracts on which later compilers mainly depended was Mr. Whitgreave's narrative of what took place at Moseley. The title of this contribution reads as follows:—"A Summary of the Occurrences relating to the Miraculous Preservation of our late Sovereign Lord King Charles II. after the defeat of his army at Worcester in the year 1651. Faithfully taken from the express testimony of those two worthy Roman Catholics, Thomas Whitgreave of Moseley in the County of Stafford, Esquire, and Mr. John Huddleston, Priest of the Holy Order of St. Bennet [Benedict], the Instruments, under God, of the same Preservation." (Among other inventions of the infamous Titus Oates was the story that he overheard a Jesuit priest say to one of his co-conspirators, "It was the worst day's work he ever did when Jack Hudleston saved King Charles's life.") This was published by the King's Printer in 1688, and, after an interval of 100 years, in the "Gentleman's Magazine." One of the most valuable sources of information as to what took place on the Sussex coast during the King's flight was a document written at the time by Colonel Gounter, who obtained the ship in which Charles sailed to France from Shoreham. Mr. Fea tells us that this paper was found in an old bureau in 1830, when it was sold by auction, with the bureau, on the Gounter mansion at Racton being dismantled.

Before we go any further it may not be amiss to state concisely how Charles came to be at Worcester. After the execution of his father in 1649 Charles and his mother, with many courtiers, slipped away to the Continent, but on June of the following year his adherents in Scotland induced him to cross the sea and raise his standard there. He was crowned King of the Scots at Scone, an army was got together, and on the 1st of August, 1651, his Majesty began his march into England, promising by proclamation a general pardon, excepting for Cromwell and all others who actually sat and voted at the condemnation of his father. He gained a temporary advantage at Warrington Bridge and on the 22nd of August took possession of Worcester. Three days afterwards a considerable force of Royalists under the command of the Earl of Derby was routed near Wigan, and on the 3rd of September a similar fate befell the King and his adherents at Worcester. For the time being the triumph of the Parliamentary forces was complete.

Now among those who after the Restoration in 1660 hastened to publish accounts of the escape of Charles was one William Lee, and this we have good reason to believe is of great rarity. It is entitled "A Brief Chronicle of the Happy Escape by a Wonderful Deliverance of His Majestie at Worcester, more fully expressed than hitherto: with His Majesties happy return, together with what passages of note hapned to this present November, 1661. The like exact account hath not as yet been printed. London: Printed for William Lee at the Turks-Head in Fleetstreet. 1662."

The author modestly informs the "courteous reader" that "this useful manual" is "the English Iliad in a nut-shel;" and after reflections on the "abundance of English blood shed profusely in several quarrels, both at home and abroad, before," he makes lament as follows:—"But behold the greatest misery of this War; the issue of it when it was past was ten times worse than the War itself, like the Viper, that expires in the production of many. The Medusa of War brought forth a Hydra of Peace, in a Serpentine Commonwealth and Democratic Anarchy. We had lost what was pretended to be fought for as soon as we had done fighting; such our fury, such our strange case." It is not necessary to add that Mr. William Lee was, as he says, "on the Royalist and justist side."

As has been already hinted, it is not intended to include in this article the details of the King's experiences at Boscobel, but for

the sake of giving an appearance of continuity we will print a few lines from Master William Lee's pamphlet, which may have been written after an interview with the Penderels or perhaps adapted from Blount. Speaking of what took place shortly after the arrival of the King at Whiteladies, he says, "Whereupon all dispatch was made to get the King out before any further danger. The King's hair was first cut off by my Lord Wilmot ; then rounded by William Pendrill ; and at the same time Richard had, by direction of Mr. Giffard, fetcht his best cloaths, being a jump and breeches of green coarse cloth, and a doe-skin leather doublet : the hat was borrowed of Humphrey Pendrill the Miller, being an old grey one that turned up its brims ; the shirt, which in that country language they call an Harden, or Noggen-shirt, a kind of linnen that is made of the coarsest of the hemp, was had of the aforesaid Martin ; George Pendrill lent the band and William Cresswell the shoes, which the King, having presently unstript himself of his own cloaths, did quickly put on. His buff-coat and linnen doublet and a grey pair of breeches, which he wore before, he gave unto his brothers' hands, who forthwith buried them under the ground, where they lay five weeks before they durst take them up again. The jewels off his arm he gave to one of the Lords then departing.

"This Thursday the King continued all day in the wood, upon the ground, Richard Pendrill being constantly with him and sometimes the other three. It proved to be a very rainy day, and the King was wet with the showers. Thereupon Francis Yates his wife came into the wood, on whom the King at first looked somewhat dubiously yet resolutely asked her whether she would be faithful to a distressed Cavalier. To which she replied, Sir, I would rather die than discover you. She brought with her a blanket to keep the King dry, and his first meat he ate there, namely, a mess of milk, eggs, and sugar, in a black earthen cup, which the King guessed to be milk and apples, and said he loved it very well. After he had drank some and eat some in a pewter spoon he gave the rest to George, and bid him eat it for it was very good.

"The King was hardly brought to fashion himself to their gate. The language in his stay he could tune pretty well. Most of the day was spent in conforming him to their words, till about five o'clock that evening the King, with his gallant retinue of Richard, Humphrey, George, and Francis Yates, left the wood

and betook himself to Richard's little house, where he went under the name of William Jones, a woodcutter newly come thither for work. At his coming, the good wife, for his entertainment at supper, was preparing a fricass of bacon and eggs, and while that was doing the King held on his knee their daughter Nan. He ate very little, ruminating and pausing on his intended passage into Wales. After supper ended, the mother of the Pendrills came and kneeled and took her leave of the King ; so did the rest of his poor mean attendants. Only Richard went along with the King, to conduct and guide him, it being then dark and the way troublesome.

"After a short conference together, it was judged by them both, as the probablest means of security, that the King should betake himself again to the wood. Accordingly, Saturday, the sixth of September, in the morning, they went into the wood together, the Colonel [Carlos] leading the way to that now so much celebrated oak, where before he had been lodged himself. William Pendrill brought a ladder by which they got up into the boughs and branches of the tree, which were very thick and well spread and full of leaves, so that it was not possible for any to see through them. When they were both up, William brought them up two pillows to lie upon where the arms and branches were thickest ; and the King, being overwearied with his journey and some travail, waxed very heavy, with a propensity to sleep. The Colonel, to ease his Majesty the best he could, desired him to lay his head in his lap and rest the other part of his body on the pillow, which the King did ; and after he had taken a good sleep (while William and his wife Joan were peaking up and down with anxious thoughts, gathering of sticks with a nut-hook) awaked very hungry and wished for some victuals. That desire was soon satisfied, the Colonel pulling out of his pocket a good luncheon of bread and cheese, which Joan had given him for provant that day, and had wrapped it up in a clean linen cloth, of which the King fed very heartily, and was well pleased with it, and highly commended the good fare. Some other pittance of relief in drink he had also, which was put up to him in a bottle by a long stick."

This vivid description of that "so much celebrated oak" establishes beyond question that it was not a full grown oak in which the King and his companion were concealed, and yet that

was for a time the popular idea as many an old inn signboard still testifies. It is doubtful whether there has ever been a full-grown oak in which two men could conceal themselves against observation from the ground, especially if the observers were soldiers whose keenness of vision had been increased by the prospect of a reward of a thousand pounds. The "Royal Oak" had of course been polled, and the branches were so spread out and the foliage was so thick as to form a nidus or nest in which not only was concealment possible but which provided a sufficient stage for the enacting of that touching scene of loyal and affectionate devotion displayed by the gallant Cavalier for his distressful Sovereign.

The following letters from the "Gentleman's Magazine" should finally dispel the idea, so tenaciously still held by some, that the oak now standing in the enclosure at Boscobel is the actual tree in which Charles and Colonel Carlos concealed themselves. The first is dated "May, 1784," and reads:—

"I do not remember to have seen, either in Plot's 'History of Staffordshire' or in any other relating to that county, a particular description of the Royal Oak which some years ago was standing in Boscobel Wood. Having been lately on a tour in that neighbourhood and visiting the place where the old tree flourished, I found it had been enclosed by a strong wall of brick and stone, but at present neglected and much in ruins. The old tree has been carried away piecemeal by the curious visitors, and some no doubt from a loyal motive and attachment to the memory of King Charles II., who was providentially sheltered from the designs of his enemies by the means of this tree. Many snuff-boxes and other toys have been made from pieces of this famous oak. At present there is another of a middling size growing within the wall but not in the centre, and was very probably planted when the old tree decayed. Upon a square stone, overgrown with moss and placed above the arch of the door, I observed a Latin inscription which after scraping with a knife became very legible. If you think it deserving of a place in your useful repository I herewith send it to you, with a translation of the same." The following is the translation:—"God, All Good and All-Great, by whom King's reign, was pleased that this auspicious Tree should here flourish for a safe Retreat to the most potent King Charles the Second.—Basil and Jane Fitzherbert, to perpetuate the Memory of so great an Event, and testify their unshaken Loyalty to Kings, built the

surrounding Wall, and recommend the fortunate Tree to the Care of future Generations.—The Oak, Jove's favourite Tree." In the following year this stone was maliciously broken to pieces.

The other letter was published in May, 1789 :—" Not long ago I visited Boscobel, so much celebrated in English history. I enquired for the *Royal Oak* ; a servant maid, instead of showing me the lions, pointed out the field where the tree once was and left me to find it out as I best could. I found a brick wall, now ruinous, which incloses a laurel hedge, now stunted and decayed, and there stood the tree, which is now gone, and which even in the days of Charles II. was a lone and pollarded tree."

In the year 1664 there was published in London a pamphlet entitled "*Miraculum Basilicon* : or the Royal Miracle, Truly Exhibiting the wonderful Preservation of His *Sacred Majesty* in, with his miraculous Escape after, the Battel of *Worcester*," etc. "By A. J. Eirenophilaethes," under which magniloquent *nom de plume* is hidden the homely name of Abraham Jenings. So far as Boscobel is concerned the writer copies from Blount, but the following is obtained from some other and less familiar source :—" His *sacred Majesty* was now arrived upon the *French* shore, where having first given humble thanks to *Almighty God, the Watchman and Preserver of Kings, The Governor of Sea and Land, and the most merciful Pacifier of Winds and Waves*, expresseth all kindness to the Master of the Ship, courteously inviting him to live and abide with him ; but he wishing the *King* all prosperity, chose rather (though not without great danger) to re-visit his own House and Family ; wherefore he takes Ship, and the Wind suddenly turning, that very night he reacheth *Pool*, a Haven in *Dorsetshire*, and sold his Coals there. The King coming to Roan, takes acquaintance with two Merchants, Mr. *Sambourn* and Mr. *Parker*, who parting his old clothes between them, as if they had been the Reliques of Saints, put his *Majesty* into new, and more becoming Apparel. Here Dr. *Earl*, now *Bishop* of *Sarisbury* (who formerly had been his *Majesties* Chaplain, and was then by chance at Roan), came to visit him, but at the first sight knew him not, whether that it were, because his Countenance was more sullied than ordinary, and his head spoyled of the former ornament of his hair, did obscure his *Majestical* presence, or the Doctor's mind astonished with so unexpected an object, had blunted his sight ; certain it is,

that he could not find *Charles* in *Charles*; till having longer, and more earnestly beheld him, at last, full of joy, he threw himself at the feet of his dear *Lord* and *Master*, as well to deprecate the fault of his slow duty, as to give vent to his passionate gratulations.

"The next day (the fame of this accident having speedily reached Paris) the *Queen of England*, the *Duke of Orleans*, with a great company of *Nobles*, goe forth to welcome him, and conduct him into the *City*, with great applause of the People. They embrace him, they pronounce him preserved for the *Joy* and *Delight* of Mankind, they call him the *Hope and Strength of England*, they heartily pray that God would ever keep and preserve him.

"Thus did that *sacred Person* escape the snares and malice of his blood-thirsty Enemies, by whom all true *English* men triumph over their Persecutors; of whose precious Life, if God himself had not taken charge, it had many times unavoidably perished, and been utterly destroyed. That among so many Persons of the meanest rank, so many of a contrary Religion, so many of the Female Sex (whose natural proneness is not easily restrained from prating), so many timorous, to whom it is death enough to hear it threatened, and lastly, so many poor or penylesse Persons, and of broken Fortunes, who could not but well approve the tender of a great summ, that for two Months together, he should not be betrayed, is plainly (if ever there were a greater) the most *Miraculous Work* of a Divine Hand."

We have at length seen the King safely landed in France and surrounded by friends in Paris. Not long afterwards his Majesty appeared before the King of France in Council, of which proceeding the following is a record:—

"The Declaration of the King of Scots to the King and Council of France, and his Speech delivered at the Council-table, at a General Assembly and Convention. By Order from the Kings Majestie. With his Manifesto, or Remonstrance, written by His own Hand, and presented to the King: And a full Narrative of all his Proceedings. Published by Authority. Imprinted at London, for George Horton, 1651.

"May it please your Majesty and this Honourable Council:

"The knowledge I had of the desire of my Scottish subjects for the restauration to me of my due Rights and Dignities, intimidated

unto me by the Commissioners of the late Treaty of Bredaw, was the cause that induced me to cast myself upon them ; wherein, when I was there, amongst them, had I been believed, I sincerely think that things had not faln out as now we see. But it is no wonder that men are slowe to believe, that so great jealousies and sedition should be raised on so little ground, for indeed from the first hour of my coming amongst them, to the last minute of my retiring from them, nothing but division and the spirit of envy appeared visible ; and so great were their distractions at the late fight at Worcester, that not above half of the Scots engaged against the Enemy ; for, with grief of heart I speak it, afoer I had given the first Onset, I made good my retreat with advantage ; and rode up to Lieut.-Gen. David Lesley, desiring him in the name of God to charge the Enemy with his Brigade at Fort Royal, who at that time were come up even within half pistol shot of the same ; but he refused to yield obedience to my earnest requests, saying, There was more safety and convenience in keeping them in a Body where they then stood, than to have them change their ground : Whereupon I again charged with my own brigade of English, consisting of Major Gen. Massies Regiment, the Earl of Cleavelands, and the Lord Wilmots, but after a sharp dispute, being over-powered, I was forced to retreat. Then I again rode up to the said Lesley, using the same expressions that I did before ; but he unworthily gave me a flat denial, insomuch that the Earl of Cleaveland desired me to desert the field, and to shift for my self, for that I was betraid, and the Scots were treacherous, so that I was enforced with a small party of horse, to force my passage into the Town ; and afterwards narrowly escaped, as appears by the ensuing Manifesto, which I here humbly present in writing with this inscription—

The Success not answerable to my Desires.

No sooner had the Enemy entered Worcester, but immediately one Col. Cobbet made up to my quarters, and as he came in at one door I went out by another, and the next day (with my Lord Wilmot) betook myself to a Wood, where diligent searchings were made by the English ; then I came out of the said Wood in the night-time, and betook myself to a Ladies house within 2 miles thereof, who kindly entertained me ; but for fear I should be discovered she cut off my hair and put me on a red perewig ; which

being done, my Lord Wilmot and my self, accompanied by this honourable Gentlewoman, took our Jesse for London, where I waited upon her as a servant, and after the space of three weeks came down the Thames in a pair of oars to Gravesend, where a Dutch barque was provided for us, and immediately we went aboard her, I myself being in Seamens habit, doing the duty of my office, until such time as we landed at Lovre de Grace : from whence I hasted to Rhoan [Rouen], where I procured (but with great difficulty for I had not a penny of money) a gray suit. Soon after my arrival, I sent a letter to my Mother to acquaint her therewith, who vouchsafed to communicate the same unto your Majesty : wherein your Highness was graciously pleased to order me an honourable Reception, for which I remain,

" Your unalterable and affectionate friend,

" C. R."

Then follows a more detailed " Narrative " of the flight of Charles, the document concluding as follows :—

" The Queen his Mother receiving an express from him made present supplication to the King of France for his Reception, in which the Queen Mother very active, and so he was permitted, and an Express sent to the Duke of Orleance for instructions therein. He was entertained in great honour and tryumph, and accompanied by the chief of the Nobility through the City of Paris to the Kings Court, where many balls were tossed, and sundry jests put forth by the Duke of Guise, which the King of Scots taking notice of declared as followeth :—' My Lord, Although the success hath not been answerable to my desires at present, yet I doubt not but in time to have it corresponding to my affections : And although your lordship may be accounted an Arteist for tossing a ball, implying that the Government of Great Brittain is almost off the hinges ; yet you may be pleased to take notice, That a skillfull watchmaker to make clean his watch, he will take it asunder, and when it is put together it will go the better so that he leave not forth one pin of it.'

' This Quibble was very well taken, and put off with much Laughture on all parties.' "

The fiction about the passing through London and down the Thames will not be harshly judged when it is remembered that doubtless the motive of the King was to throw off the scent

the authorities in the South of England and so save his friends from the fearful consequences of having aided him in his flight. At the French Court the King remained for some years, " but," says Cunningham in his " Lives of Eminent and Illustrious Englishmen," " his licentious character soon stripped him of the respect of the French Court and in a moment of spleen he retired to Cologne," where he complained, in a letter to his Aunt, the Queen of Bohemia, that there was " a want of good fiddlers and someone capable of teaching himself and his court the new dances." Surely nothing more severe has ever been said about Charles II. than that his profligacy offended the Court of Louis XIV.

Tixall Hall and Titus Oates.

BY KARL CHERRY.

TO appreciate the full significance of the wrong that was done to Lord Aston of Tixall in the year 1678, we must for a moment glance at the wrong-headedness of which his ancestor, Sir Walter Aston, was guilty, a century before that date. It will be instructive to extend this Study over the whole of that century; for the history of Tixall Hall affords an interesting example of the swing of the pendulum, and incidentally of the utter futility of persecution as a weapon in high controversy. In 1579 we find that Tixall Hall is the local headquarters of a party pledged to the persecution and uprooting of the Catholics. Therefore, in 1679 the Hall has become the local centre of Catholicism. No reaction could be more logical; no sequel more inevitable.

Sir Walter was an ardent Protestant, and as a justice of the peace kept a sharp eye on the "directors" of the Jesuit strongholds of Staffordshire—Alton, Aston Hall, Biddulph, Boscobel, Moseley, Stafford, St. Thomas (near Stafford), Swinnerton, and Wolverhampton. Indeed, in the last-named town, the fathers had become so numerous and so influential that the place was known as *Roma Parva*, or "Little Rome."

Here Mr. Levison, or Leuson, kept a large school which a few years later was made the subject of a raid. Mr. Levison and his pupils were apprehended and sent to London, and the house was ransacked. Many Catholic books were seized, and a chest containing sacred vessels. Several reminders of that raid are preserved among the Domestic State Papers. They consist of draft letters in the handwriting of Sir John Coke, addressed to the kinsfolk of the juvenile delinquents. As an example, the following is the note that was sent to Sir John Persall, of Horsley, Staffordshire:—

"Whereas, John Stanford, sonne of William Stanford, of Perry Hall, in the Countie of Stafford, Esquire, being about [MS. torn] years of age, was lately found among other children at the

house of one Mr. Leuson in the Countie aforesaid, where he was trained up as a scholler under a Priest or Jesuit. In regard of his nearness in bloude, he being your grandchild, we have thought fitt to put him into your hands for the present, praying and requiring you to keep him in your custody until further orders shall be taken for his education, &c.

"Dated at the Court at Whitehall, 9 Dec. 1635.

"Signed. Lo. Archp. of Cant.

Lo. Keeper.

Mr. Secy. Coke."

The attitude of Sir Walter Aston was less paternal than this, and the victim of his most virulent animosity was Father Sutton. In cross-examining this priest, Sir Walter put an acute accent on his questions by twice striking the prisoner with his staff, and by knocking him down. Sir Walter committed him to Stafford gaol and insisted upon giving evidence against him at the Assizes. He protested that if his evidence were not accepted he would never sit on the bench again. That was a prospect so alarming that the Court let him have his will, and shortly afterwards Father Sutton "was put off the ladder, and cut down very lively, for he stood upon his feet, and after being dismembered spoke these words, 'O, thou bloody butcher, God forgive you!' Then, calling upon Jesus and Mary, he expired."

That took place near the gaol at Stafford, in which town the following Roman Catholics were arraigned by Sir Walter Aston for having heard Father Sutton recite the Mass: "Erasmus Woulesley and William Maxfield, Esquires; Edward and Francis Thornton and Edward Spratt, gentlemen; and William Mynors, yeoman." They were all sentenced to death, but were ultimately let off on payment of heavy fines. Maxfield, however, died in Stafford gaol while still under sentence of death. He was the father of Thomas Maxfield, who was born at Chesterton Hall, and was subsequently executed for officiating as a priest.

That also was the fate of Father Southam, a Jesuit missionary of Baswich, near Stafford. He was seized at the altar, hurried to Stafford gaol in his vestments, and in a few weeks his head on a spear adorned one of the gates of the town.

Many Roman Catholics died in gaol at Stafford, among them being William Knowles of Kidware, Mistress Joan Vyze of Stoke(?),

and Edmund Vyze of Stoke (?). William Deeg, of Burton-on-Trent, was committed to the gaol, but was privately hanged by a magistrate and his constable in the house of the former. The Vyzes were probably of the same family as that of Ursula Vyze, the mother of Lady Stafford. In that case Stawn (Stawnton) has been mistaken by a copyist or, more probably, by an amanuensis, for Stoke. Burial was refused in a churchyard, so they were all interred in "The Friary" at Stafford.

A century passed, Charles II. was on the throne, and the Jesuits of Staffordshire were still under close supervision. The reigning Lord Aston, however, was himself a Catholic, and at Tixall Hall received the Fathers as honoured guests. Here, at any rate, they could escape from that Reign of Terror which had been instituted by the supposed disclosures of Titus Oates. It was believed that a wide-spread plot was on foot to murder the King, to place the Duke of York on the throne, and to establish the Catholic religion in England. We are not concerned here with the rights or wrongs of the "Plot" as a whole, but only with its effect upon the lord of Tixall Hall and his guests. It is enough to say that, except in the case of Coleman, not one iota of evidence was produced which, had it been properly sifted, could prove that any one of the prisoners had been guilty of treason. That there was a conspiracy is certain; so much is conclusively proved by the cipher letters in the possession of the Fitzherberts; but it was a conspiracy that had as its object nothing more criminal than the introduction of the Catholic religion into England—a misdemeanour, but certainly not high treason. There is a wide moral difference as well as technical distinction between the two; but the English people had soon reached that stage in the development of Lynch Law at which discrimination ends.

To read the story is to suffer humiliation. A whole nation suddenly became incapable of the most elementary exercise of reason and common sense; a whole nation, spiritually descended from fearless Luther, was shaking in its shoes; a whole nation dishonoured itself in the most contemptible travesty of justice that has ever disgraced the annals of English history; a whole nation, the sworn foe of Jesuitry, out-Loyola'd Loyola in the perpetration of crime that good might come; a whole nation, professing contempt for the Jesuit vows of obedience, allowed itself to be led by the nose at the behest of a wastrel and a charlatan.

The Roman Catholics who foregathered at Tixall could place every confidence in their host, despite the animus of his ancestor, Sir Walter ; but they had reckoned without his bailiff, Stephen Dugdale, who happened just then to be under a cloud of his own, and of his own making.

Having embezzled a considerable sum of Lord Aston's money, Dugdale absconded. Unfortunately Tixall Hall was now under observation, the roads were guarded by the military, and Dugdale, as he was in the act of stealthily escaping, was arrested. It occurred to his captor that if he did not already know anything of the Popish Plot an opportunity might be given him of refreshing his memory. Some such course was becoming more and more necessary. For three months had Oates been scouring the country for some witness who would confirm his evidence. Here was a well-spoken man of good local repute, but apparently with an uneasy conscience, escaping from the precincts of a suspected house. If he had no corroborative evidence just now, a few days' solitary introspection in Stafford gaol would probably furnish him with all that was necessary.

This prognosis was fully justified in the event. At first, Dugdale swore that he knew nothing of any plot, and that there was nothing to be known. Had he taken the oath of allegiance and supremacy ? No ; but he very quickly would. He was "detained." They spoke to him of a free pardon for this and *for any other offence* ; of the reward that had been offered for the capture of his friends ; and of wealth and comfort in striking contrast with his present misery. Dugdale did not hesitate for long :—

"Whilst Harcourt [the Provincial of the Jesuits in England] was copying something in the house of Lord Aston, I had an opportunity," he affirmed on oath, "of observing his handwriting. I next saw a letter which was written in his own hand, and was sent by the public letter-carrier to Every or Evers, a Jesuit [the chaplain at Tixall] instructing him to depute trusty and daring men—whether noble or commoners mattered not—to kill the King. I was very often present at deliberations on that affair, held in Every's chamber, when Gavan [a priest of Wolverhampton] delivered an address to the assembly, grounded upon divine matters of Scripture, which I do not remember, proving both the lawfulness and excellence of this action, and I was solicited to undertake the business myself. After this, I drew 600 gold crowns and

received the promise of another 400 to accomplish the work. Gavan thereupon assured me that, in return for my services, I should be enrolled in the Calendar of the Saints. Turner, [who voluntarily surrendered himself as a Jesuit] two years ago, in Every's chamber, plotted the death of the King, and undertook to promote the affair in Worcestershire. I saw a letter from Waring [Jesuit Rector of London, afterwards executed on this information] dated October 4, 1678, in which these words were distinctly written 'This evening Justice Godfrey is despatched.' "

On this information Lord Aston was impeached and committed to the Tower. Several other laymen were arrested and lodged in Stafford gaol. How thoroughly Dugdale had "refreshed his memory" is apparent in the following letter from Sir Robert Southwell to Mr. G. Treby, and preserved amongst the Fitzherbert Manuscripts:—

" 1679. March 28. Spring Gardens.—I have now in obedience to the orders of the Lords of the [Committee] of Examinations about the Plott, dated the 15th or 25th instant, reviewed all those bundles that were sent from the Councill of matters arising since the first of January last. The 24 papers found at Tixal I gave you in their order Tuesday night, with a general list of their contents. In three letters writt from one William Southall of Staffordshire he says that Mr. Higgens who [went] by the name of Robert Palmer was taken at Highone [High Onn], that he proves [a] priest and is sent to gaole. That Thomas Manloe proves a priest and sent to gaole. That Francis Levison was taken and sent to gaole. One Peters, a Jesuit (often accused by Dugdale for the conspiracy) is there also in gaole. George Hobson (formerly a tennant to the Lord Stafford, and lately tennant to the Lord Aston, and knowing of the conspiracy as is testified by Mr. Dugdale's evidence of the 24th or 29th December and 21st of Feb.) is in the same gaole. One Nor[th] (servant to the Lord Aston and nephew to Pickering) is in the same gaole for infamous words against his Majestie, testified by Mr. Dugdale. There is also one Cotton, priest to Mr. Heveningham, whom Dugdale often mentions to be engaged in the conspiracy, but being 86 yeares of age and infirm, he remains with a mittimus in the hands of a constable there.

" In Mr. Southall's said letter of the 20th of Feb. notice is taken of Mr. Howard of Hore-Cross, who, when Southall came

to his house with a warrant to search, he knocked a pistol at him. . . . That in the same letter it is said that Mr. Lewson Gowre, being at the sessions, did observe Sir Symen Deg to give the charge more favourably concerning Papists than others, and did thereupon tell him that he spoke more like a Jesuit than a justice.

"Memorandum. That among the Tixal papers No. 9, there is a letter of the 28th December, 1676, writt from the present Lord Aston to his father, which shows how great kindness the Lord Stafford professed towards them, and that they were procuring some letter of favour from his Majestie which, it seems, cost this Lord much hammering. Perhaps if such letter were seen, [it would] give light to other things.

"Also in the Tixal bundle No. 3 there is a letter signed Thos. Whitgreve without date or place, by which it appears the Lord Aston had been twice at his house, and if that letter were writt since Mr. Otes' discovery it would import very much, especially if this be the same Whitgreve who is a justice of the peace of whom Mr. Dugdale can give t evidence of his correspondence with the Papists."

Father Evers or Every, the Tixall chaplain, after a number of hairbreadth escapes, contrived to escape to the Continent. Father Gavan of Wolverhampton and a guest at Tixall was arrested in London, concealed in the coachman's bed in the stables of Count Woleysteyn. Shortly before that, however, Father Ireland, another guest of Lord Aston's, had been tried and executed.

During the trial of Gavan we get an interesting glimpse of one phase in the chequered history of Boscobel House. Father Ireland, it should be mentioned, was related to both the Giffards and the Penderels, and it is in connection with him that Boscobel entered at one point into Gavan's trial:—

"*Gavan.* Call Mr. Pendrell and his wife [Then Pendrell stood up.]

The Lord Chief Justice. When did you see Mr. Ireland? I saw him on the 2nd and 3rd of September.

The L. C. J. Where did you see him? At Boscobel.

The L. C. J. How do you know you saw him there? My wife being paid for his diet set down the day.

The L. C. J. What? He came to sojourn with you? They were with me for their meals and so my wife set it down.

The L. C. J. Do you set down the day of the month when anyone comes to see you? Yes, my lord, when we are paid for their diet.

The L. C. J. What? Do you keep a public house? I keep *The Royal Oak*."

The trial of Father Gavan was interesting, too, for another reason: he demanded to be tried by the obsolete but still legal method of trial by ordeal. Neither that nor efforts more rational in his ably conducted defence could save him; for the prosecution attached an inexplicable degree of importance to the following letter addressed by Edward Peters to a neighbour and fellow-Jesuit in Burton-on-Trent:—

"These for his honoured friend, Mr. William Tunstall at Burton.

"Hon. and dear Sir,

"I have but time to convey the following particulars to you. First, I am to give you notice that it hath seemed fitting to our Master *Consult. Prov., &c.*, to fix the 21st day of April next (*Stilo Veteri*) for the meeting at London of our congregation, on which day all those that have a suffrage are to be present there, that they may be ready to give a beginning to the same on the 24th, which is the next after St. George's Day. You are warned to have *jus sufragii*,(*) and therefore, if your occasion should not permit you to be present, you are to signify as much to the end that others in their ranks be ordered to supply your absence. Every one is minded also not to hasten to London long before the time appointed, nor to appear much about the town until the meeting be over, lest occasion should be given to suspect the design. Finally, secrecy as to time and place is much recommended to all those that receive summons, as will appear of its own nature necessary. *Tertio pro Domino Solono Disco Benefact. Prov. Luniensis [i.e., Lugduniensis].*"

This letter was neither addressed to Gavan nor written by him, and was therefore inadmissible in evidence. In conjunction with the unsupported statement of Dugdale, however, it was instrumental in sending him to the scaffold. As regards the letter itself, a document among the Harleian MSS. fully explains the

* i.e., "warning has been given us that you are entitled to a vote."

references therein. Before we consider them, however, it should be stated that the Jesuits had elaborated a complicated and ingenious system of cipher. In this they took so childish a delight that often, in examining Jesuit records, we find perfectly innocent remarks hidden away in a cryptogrammic maze of figures and geometric signs. Had this letter possessed a sinister meaning is it likely that the writer would have made it decipherable? But the letter had no such meaning, and this was made perfectly clear at the trial and is confirmed by the Harleian manuscript to which I have referred. The "design" of the Congregation was to elect from its number a procurator "to proceed to Rome to inform the General of their particular and private affairs." The Latin passage at the end of the letter embodied nothing more treasonable than a Catholic formula, ordering that prayers be offered for the repose of some benefactor of the Society. In the present instance three Masses were to be said on behalf of a deceased benefactor of the province of Lyons.

It was on the Christmas Eve of 1678 that Dugdale laid his first information against the Tixall group of Catholics. When, in the following February, he was examined before the King in Council, he had still further "refreshed his memory" (*) and had brocaded his original affidavits with picturesque and imaginative details. The following is a transcript of what was taken down on this latter occasion, and is, I believe, to be seen only in the Fitzherbert Collection of Manuscripts. Apart from its references to local persons and places, the document is interesting as showing how purely hearsay was the character of the evidence admitted, for none of the people named were called upon to confirm the information:—

"The informant" wrote the Clerk "saith that he hath before, in discourse, acquainted the Lords of the Committee that, while he was in prison at Stafford and before he came to make his confession, there was much discourse spread abroad that he would confess. Upon which report, Elizabeth Elde was sent over by the Lord Aston to Mr. Fitter, the priest of Mr. Fowler at St. Thomas, desiring him to have a meeting with his Lordship in a certain field called Brancote, near the River side, which was done accordingly. When Fitter came home he told one of Mr. Fowler's

* "Refresh your memory" was the favourite exhortation of Lord Chief Justice Scroggs when a Crown witness contradicted himself.

daughters what had passed," hearsay once removed, "namely, that they, discoursing of the informant and of the danger of his discovering [*i.e.*, disclosing] all, Lord Aston did even weep, and that Fitter did tell his lordship he suspected that the informant would prove untrue, and that his lordship had done ill that he did not despatch him before ever he (Dugdale) went out of his house. This discourse Mr. Fowler's daughter told to Elizabeth Elde," hearsay twice removed, "she being a messenger of trust employed to bespeak the said meeting. And Elde did come to the informant while he was in prison at Stafford, which is but two miles from Tixall from which he had some messenger every day, and did relate the whole matter to him." That is hearsay thrice removed, Dugdale himself making *the fourth* medium through which the story had filtered in its journey to its present audience.

"He further saith that, after that, he made his discovery [disclosure]. Thereupon the Justices issued warrants for the seizure of George Hobson and George North (which North is nephew to Pickering) both of them servants in the house of the Lord Aston. The warrants were served by Edward Preston, the constable of the place, and also a servant to the said lord." What follows, although not in itself incriminating, was ingeniously designed to show that Lord Aston went in fear of his ex-bailiff. The story was based on hearsay that had passed through at least four channels. "*It was reported* [*the italics are mine*] that Lord Aston thereupon said in a great passion that he was sorry he had not run the informant through with his sword before he went out of the house. The report of these words came to Mary and Elizabeth Stevenson, daughters of the then Mayor of Stafford, and by one of them to the wife of the informant's gaoler, who told the informant thereof. He did repeat this story to Joseph Tarboy, another of Lord Aston's servants, who came to see him in prison. Informant bid him tell his lordship that he was sorry Lord Aston should have had any thoughts to do him such injury. The next day Tarboy returned to the informant, having with him the constable, Preston, to testify that he had never heard his lordship say so and that his lordship did send him word that he never wished the informant's finger to ake, but wished him all the happiness he could imagine, and hoped all would do well and that the informant might come back to his service."

Unfortunately, at the trial of one of the suspects, *a witness for the Crown*, Sir William Bagot, the Staffordshire magistrate, swore that Lord Aston disowned his late bailiff with the words, "He is no servant of mine." The contradiction was allowed to pass, and the inference remained in the minds of the jury that Lord Aston had reason to ingratiate himself with his late servant. I have devoted a good deal of space to the record of this trumpery incident, but it is instructive as a specimen of the sort of flimsy stuff that was accepted as serious evidence against the accused.

When Oates was finally brought to justice, it became evident that had Father Ireland, who had been executed, called Mr. Gerard of Hilderstone, he must have proved an *alibi*. Why was Gerard not called? Because the prisoner had been forestalled by Dugdale, who, conscious of the evidence Gerard had it in his power to give, deprived him of that power by the simple expedient of depriving him of his liberty. The information, however, was so obviously false that the Crown dare not bring Gerard to trial. Neither was there any need to do so; it was sufficient to keep him under lock and key. This they did for nearly twelve months, after which time Ireland was safely executed, while Gerard obtained his release by dying miserably of exhaustion in solitary confinement.

He was the great-grandson of Sir Gilbert Gerard, Attorney-General and Master of the Rolls to Queen Elizabeth. It was this Sir Gilbert who during that reign bought Hilderstone, in Staffordshire, from one George Collier. In the case of Dugdale's victim, it is interesting to observe that some poetical justice was done by Gerard's son, William, who, in 1685, was one of the witnesses against Oates, and was instrumental in bringing the perjurer under the six-thonged whip of the public hangman.

Dugdale's energies were beginning to flag; but still the panic-stricken public cried for more victims, and his success in bringing to the scaffold Father Atkins, of Wolverhampton, completely restored to him the confidence and regard of the magistrates and the gratitude of his fellow countrymen. That gratitude became lyrical, and was expressed in an extremely rare "broadside," a few lines of which will serve to show the state of feeling in the country:—

"The World is all on fire in Jesus' Name
 By quick nos'd Jesuits who hunt for Game;
 Whose hidden subtile souls in Malace burn
 To ruin mighty Nations, and to turn
 Their Cities into Ashes, cut the Strings
 Of all Societies, to murder Kings
 And Kingdoms at one blow. O wicked Seed!
 Such monsters Affrick never yet did breed.

* * *

They mined, and thou did'st countermine so fast
 To blow them and their Plots up at one blast,
 Like a Physician that is always sure,
 Thou did'st not use thy remedies for Cure
 Till the disease was ripe: then from thy skonce
 They and their Fireworks were blown up at once:
 A pill so bitter to the Vulgar sight
 The Plotters and the Plots were brought to light,
 Forced and compelled by thine ingenious Art
 To vomit up the poyson of the Heart.
 And had not Providence thus stopp'd the Flood
 England had swum in her own scarlet blood."

The very fact that these forgotten lines exhibit considerable literary power indicates the hold that fanaticism had obtained even upon the educated and cultivated classes.

In the case of the aged Father Atkins, no pretence was made to implicate him in the plot. He was indicted at Stafford for high treason; he was found guilty of administering the sacrament. In concluding his summing up, the Lord Chief Justice denounced him to the jury as one who had departed from the simplicity and meekness of Christ's teaching, and would "bring in a religion of blood and tyranny. I need not say more to you; the matter's plain. I think you need not stir out from the box—but do as you will." The jury returned a verdict of guilty and the judge showed his abhorrence of "a religion of blood and tyranny" by passing upon the old man a sentence so revolting and harrowing that in these days it cannot be put into print. For malignant cruelty it has never been surpassed by the most debased of cannibal savages. It almost passes belief that any Christian judge could ever have forced such words to pass his lips, that any man can ever have been so callous as to mangle, dismember, and dishonour

the body of a fellow-creature for pay, and that thousands could coolly look on while these fiendish horrors were being perpetrated. It is deeds like this which led the late Duke of Argyll to believe that whatever doctrine we may hold with regard to the Fall, there must have been a fall, because man is so much worse than the animals.

That sentence, at the same assize at Stafford was also passed on Father Andrew Bromwich. Atkins died in Stafford gaol before the sentence could be executed, but Bromwich suffered the full penalty of the law.

Lord Aston remained a prisoner in the Tower until June, 1685, when, "on application of Parliament," he was discharged. He became Lord Lieutenant of the county, and in the Revolution of 1688 held for a time Chester Castle on behalf of King James II. He died in 1714 at the age of eighty-one, and in 1751 the barony became dormant. Of himself and his family, Fuller in his "Worthies" has written:—

"I have not met with a more noble family, measuring on the level of flat and unadvantaged antiquity. They have ever born a good respect to the church and to learned men."

Dugdale, however, had reserved his *chef d'œuvre* until the last. This was the indictment for high treason of his master's intimate friend, Lord Stafford. He was nearly seventy years of age, and it would be difficult to imagine one less inclined by temperament to indulge himself in treason or conspiracy. He was, it is true, a Catholic and a Howard; but all those public and secret activities that have become associated with his name and his Faith were repugnant to his taste. In respect to his Faith he seems to have been influenced most by what we may call the meaner tendencies of Jesuitism—by the cult of the quibble and by the indulgence in shifty evasions and that ingenious splitting of hairs characteristic of too many of his brethren. It has been said that his friends were surprised by the astute and vigorous way in which he conducted his defence. If that is so, it says little for the normal calibre of his intellect. On the contrary, many of the obstacles he placed in the way of the prosecution seem pitifully childish and undignified. For instance, when asked if there were any reason why sentence should not be passed upon him, he pleaded that he had not been ordered to hold up his hand when the jury were directed "to look upon the prisoner."

That, however, does not exonerate Bishop Burnet for branding his memory in the abominable way he did. "He had been guilty," wrote that historian, "of great vices in his youth which had almost proved fatal to him." That is a statement that is not only unsupported by a single iota of evidence, but is directly contradicted by all we know of the early life of this ill-fated nobleman. The worst that can be said of him is that he was childish and overfond of the airing of small grievances; one whose life was largely governed by small prejudices and filled by small and inoffensive hobbies. He was a Fellow of the Royal Society. "He was deemed," wrote Reresby, "to be weaker than the other lords in the Tower, and was therefore purposely marked out to be first brought on." And brought on he was, before the House of Lords, when Dugdale gave evidence as follows:—

"I have been frequently acquainted, while I was a servant at my Lord Aston's, with my lord Stafford coming to my lord's house in the country. And, my lord having been there several times, I came to such intimacy, by Mr. Evers' means, that my lord would frequently discourse with me. About the latter end of August, or some day in September, Lord Aston, Lord Stafford, and several other gentlemen were in a room in my lord Aston's house, and by means of Mr. Evers I was admitted to hear for my encouragement. And there I heard them fully determine that to take the life of the King was the best way they could resolve on as the speediest means to introduce their own religion.

"Some time in September, my lord being at Mr. Abnett's house in Stafford, my lord Stafford came to Tixall upon a Sunday morning to hear Mass. I meeting him at the outer gate [*i.e.*, the well-known gate-house] he alighted from his horse." Whereupon, continued witness, Lord Stafford promised him £500 to assist them in bringing in the Roman Catholic religion. The King was to be killed and Dugdale was to be canonised. The witness also alleged that he heard treasonable conversation when he was standing concealed behind an oak tree at Tixall. That tree is still standing on the eastern side of the present hall. It is sometimes called "Stafford's Oak," and Dr. Langford, in his "History of Staffordshire and Warwickshire," while describing famous oak trees, says "Oates Oak, at Tixall, derived its name in some way from Titus Oates."

Lord Stafford called Sir Thomas Whitgreave, who attested that Dugdale, when first arrested, had resolutely denied the existence of any plot at all. Other witnesses swore that Dugdale had offered them heavy bribes to give evidence against the prisoner, and finally Lord Stafford urged the fact that Dugdale's evidence was unsupported in its material details.

After the trial had lasted six days, an end was reached amid ceremony and circumstance which are worth recording.

The prisoner having been removed, proclamation was made for silence, and the Lord High Steward took his seat on the wool-sack. He was attended by Garter King of Arms, Black Rod, and nine mace-bearers. Then, beginning at the puisne barons, he took the verdict of the peers by word of mouth, as thus :—

"My lord Butler of Weston, is William Lord Viscount Stafford, guilty of treason whereof he stands impeached, or not guilty?"

"Not guilty, upon mine honour."

The question was put to the rest, who made reply, each upon his honour as a peer of the realm. Of the prisoner's kinsmen, Lord Mowbray alone found him Not Guilty, a fact that lends sinister emphasis to a remark by Evelyn, the diarist, "He was not a man beloved especially of his own family."

By a majority of twenty-four, Lord Stafford was found guilty of high treason, and the customary sentence, which has been referred to already, was passed upon him. By the clemency of the King the horror of that sentence was reduced to simple beheading. The question was raised whether Charles had power to perform that act of mercy, and the usually humane Lord Russell vehemently demanded that the full penalty of the law should be carried out. The King, however, had his way, and we do not perhaps sufficiently realise the grave danger he was thus incurring. Charles has left behind him a memory sadly besmirched by unkingly folly and unmanly profligacy. He was, however, kind-hearted—too indolent, possibly, to play the tyrant—and he was forgiving to the point of weakness. Let us, therefore, place it to his credit that on this occasion he played the king and saved his people from this crowning dishonour.

On the 29th of December in the year 1680, several persons had gathered on the scaffold on which Lord Stafford, as far as he was concerned, was to see the Old Year out. Two reporters, or

clerks, were busily noting the throng of upturned faces around them and recognising the features of more eminent personages in the windows and balconies above. They were joined by a man who carried over his shoulder a stout bag. This he laid down, and produced his wares. They consisted of an axe and two blocks, one of which was new, the other old, hacked, and stained. Then the headsman spread out a piece of black cloth some two yards and a half in length, on which the prisoner, who was now approaching, would have to stretch himself. A coffin was hoisted up; on it were painted the letters "W.S. 1680."

At last the prisoner, Lord Stafford, mounted the scaffold. He asked at once for the executioner and bought from him for seven guineas the clothes which he himself was at that moment wearing; they were the headsman's perquisites. Then he went to the edge of the scaffold and read his speech.

It was long, and contained little that had not already been said at the trial. He concluded by publicly forgiving his enemies and by prayer for the King's happiness and welfare. The gist of the old man's address was entirely contained in his closing words:—

"I do now, upon my death and salvation, aver that I never spoke one word either to Oates or Turbervile, or, to my knowledge, ever saw them until my trial: and for Dugdale, I never spoke unto him of anything but about a foot-boy or footman and a race, and never was then alone with him. All the punishment I wish them is that they may repent and acknowledge the wrong that they have done me. God forgive them! . . . I do with my last breath assert my innocence, and hope the omnipotent, all-seeing, just God will deal with me accordingly."

With that, he handed a manuscript copy of his speech to Sheriff Cornish, with the request that it might be forwarded to the King; desired, too, that he might have liberty to pray after his wonted fashion. Leave was granted him, and he knelt down and recited a Latin prayer. Then he rose to his feet, calm and refreshed.

"God bless you, gentlemen!" he cried. "God preserve his Majesty; obey him as faithfully as I have done, and God bless you all, gentlemen!"

A minister approached and said —

"Sir, do you disown the indulgences of the Romish Church?"

"Sir," replied the prisoner sadly, "what have you to do with my religion? However, I do say that the Church of Rome allows no indulgences for murder and lying, and whatever I have said is true."

"Have you received no absolution?"

"I have received none at all."

"You say that you never saw those witnesses?"

"I never saw any of them but Dugdale, and that was when I spoke to him about a foot-boy."

Having distributed some keepsakes among his friends, he allowed his page to strip him of his coat and peruke, and then laid his head on the block and stretched himself out.

There was a pause, due to some misunderstanding on the part of the headsman. He seemed smitten by stupidity. The sheriffs stepped forward. Was he waiting, they asked, for some sign from the prisoner? Lord Stafford, who was very deaf, scrambled stiffly to his feet and inquired what they wanted. He was asked what sign he would give. "No sign at all. Take your own time. God's will be done." "I hope you will forgive me?" said the headsman. "I do." They were the last words he said. The head was virtually severed at one blow. So ended the last of Dugdale's victims, and the last phase in the tragedy of Tixall Hall.

Dugdale himself soon vanished from the scene. In the trial of Colledge in the following year he swore to the truth of a certain denial in evidence he had given, adding solemnly that he had never suffered from the disease mentioned (which he was said to have cloaked by saying that he had been poisoned by Papists) and protested that if it could be proved by any physician that he had so suffered *he was content that all the evidence he had ever given should be discredited for ever.*

For a witness to make so bold a challenge as that, he must have perfect confidence either in his own innocence or, if he be guilty, in the criminal partiality of the authorities. Dugdale's confidence was fully justified—*not*, however, by the consciousness of his own innocence.

The most eminent physician in London, and a Protestant withal, proved that the fellow had been under treatment for the disease mentioned; his evidence was confirmed by the apothecary who dispensed the prescriptions. The Crown, after that, dispensed

with the services of Stephen Dugdale. They could hardly be expected to prosecute their own witness.

It is a beneficent rule in modern courts of justice that a jury shall be kept in ignorance of a prisoner's previous record, until they have returned their verdict concerning that particular offence of which he stands charged. The moment has now come, however, for us very briefly to review the previous record of Titus Oates.

He seems to have been born to be expelled. In 1667 he entered Merchant Taylors' School, whence he was expelled in the same year. He entered at Gonville and Caius College, Cambridge, and was compelled swiftly to migrate. He entered St. John's College, from which seat of learning he was expelled. He managed to creep into orders, and became curate to his father at Hastings. In conjunction with his parent he trumped up a blackmailing charge of an abominable nature against a schoolmaster. The indictment was quashed and Titus, unable to pay the damages of £1,000, was thrown into gaol. An indictment of perjury was preferred against him while he was in Dover prison, whereupon he contrived to escape from confinement and obtained a berth as chaplain on one of the King's ships. He was expelled, and next became chaplain to the Protestants in the household of the Duke of Norfolk. Here he first conceived the notion of worming himself into the secrets of the Jesuit fathers, and submitted himself to the Roman obedience. He joined a Jesuit College in Valladolid, from which, by reason of his gross immorality, he was speedily expelled. He joined the English Seminary at St. Omer and was expelled in June, 1678.

That was the man for whom, in 1689, after the Prince of Orange had ascended the throne, the House of Commons expressed their regard in the following terms:—"Resolved, that the prosecution of Titus Oates upon two indictments for perjury in the Court of King's Bench was a design to stifle the Popish Plot, that the verdicts given thereupon were corrupt, and that the judgements given thereupon were corrupt and illegal."

This was passed, as was also a bill to reverse the two judgments in question. The latter, however, was thrown out by the Lords, and the most notorious perjurer in the history of Europe remained in prison, and continued to make his annual appearance in the pillory.

Of that mansion of Tixall, nothing remains to-day save the beautiful and justly celebrated gate-house, that "outer gate" at which Lord Stafford dismounted, little dreaming that the plausible servant who aided him was, in a few months, to bring him to the scaffold. The ancient portal stands to-day, calm and dignified, four-square to every troublesome storm that may beat upon its venerable face. It has seen a nation goaded into barbarity by unfounded fears ; to-day, it stands as an emblem, let us hope, of a wiser, saner, calmer England, guarding her inheritance but no less watchful over herself. Unmoved by panic and deaf to the evil suggestions of fanatics, she has thrown open her gates to followers of all shades of religious belief, asking only that they meddle not in the ordering of her own devotions, nor forget to tender to herself the courtesy and consideration that is due from uninvited guests.

The Hero of Hopton Heath (1643).

BY KARL CHERRY.

It is perhaps not surprising that so little is known locally of the details of the battle of Hopton Heath. Of all the great historians of the Civil War, Clarendon alone deals with it, and his account is comprised in the space of some twenty lines, in which he hardly more than hints at the desperate nature of the fighting and of the stake for which they fought. Equally meagre is his reference to the heroic end of the irreconcilable Cavalier who, on March 19, 1643, dashed out from the imperilled town of Stafford and, "foremost fighting, fell." This leader was Spencer Compton, 2nd Earl of Northampton; the story of his personal prowess and of the engagement in which he fell forms the subject of this brief historical study.

A contemporary portrait of the Earl, in the possession of the Marquis of Northampton, may be seen at the latter's seat of Castle Ashby. The handsome face still bears a few traces of bygone dissipation; but the countenance is one of truly heroic mould. The eyes are set wide apart, frank, fearless, yet kindly withal; chin and lips seem informed by the very spirit of the battleaxe; and the nose is that of one who had never snivelled in shame or dishonour; who had never cringed even to the King himself; who had walked humbly before his God, and before Him alone.

Although the classic historians are silent on the subject, there has been discovered in the Library of the British Museum a dusty, time-stained pamphlet of great rarity, and the little tract adds considerably to our knowledge of the Earl and of the circumstances of his death. The pamphlet was written by an eyewitness of the fray a few days after the battle, and is entitled "The Battaile on Hopton Heath in Staffordshire between his Majestie's Forces under the Right Honourable

the Earle of Northampton and those of the Rebels. March 19, 1643."

The author's preamble is marked by a caustic humour and a grim satire that contrasts curiously with the terrible realism of the closing scene in the drama that was played out on that lonely heath near Stafford town:—

"It is too manifest," he says, "what poor shifts the authors of this rebellion have used to bring about their designs; among whom none have been more busie than Sir William Brereton and Sir John Gell. These two have conspired together (one would think) to be beaten as often as they unite their mutual forces. Witness Ashby-de-la-Zouch and other places where they shamefully have been worsted by that noble and courageous Colonell Hastings. Though I must tell you that both Brereton and Gell, for their personal valour, are as notorious cowards as any in the sawpit. I confess, indeed, that Gell dare fight—provided that his enemy have been seven years dead; his valour having lately shewn itself against the coffins and monuments of some dead men whose living faces he durst not look upon. It is as if his business lay (like that of the devil in the Gospell) among the tombs and sepulchres. And Brereton is as valliant as he, if lying down in a ditch or standing behind a hayrick may go for valour, of which performances his own men confess him guilty."

On Friday, the 17th of March, 1643, the garrison of Stafford received intelligence of the advance of the Parliament troops in considerable force. Their information was rather vague, both as to the numbers of the enemy and the direction in which they were approaching. A council of war was hurriedly summoned, and it was conjectured that "a town called Heywood in Staffordshire" was probably their objective. The Royalist Intelligence Department was more efficient at Stafford than it proved to be elsewhere; for the surmise was correct, and in a reconnaissance the Royalists fell upon two hundred of the enemy quartered in the little township of Great Heywood. More than half of the enemy were taken or slain, "the rest escaping by most difficult bye-ways, so that we could not follow them."

The Cavaliers returned to Stafford on the Saturday (March 18), and the early hours of Sunday, March 19, were

spent in comparative peace. Those, however, were troublous times for our county town, and the repose of the garrison was soon to be rudely broken:—

“About 12 of the clock we had intelligence that Sir William Brereton and Sir John Gell, having joined all their forces of about 3,000 Horse and Foot, were placed upon a Heath, called Hopton Heath, near a town called Weston, some two miles [*sic*] from Stafford.”

“Boot and saddle!” was the order, for all knew that the two great parties were to come to grips at last; and Stafford had been waiting long. As the worshippers streamed out of St. Mary’s and St. Chad’s into the nipping March air, they beheld a party of 900 horse go clattering through the gate to offer battle to a force nearly four times their number. And at their head Compton, Earl of Northampton, rode fiercely to his doom.

“We drew out our Horse and Dragoons,” says the chronicler, “and the Heath seeming fair we resolved to charge them, the breadth of it being more than musket shot from side to side. As we advanced, however, we discovered musketeers placed within a “walled Close;” and their right wing was also ambuscaded by musketeers concealed behind hedges. This double ambush gave the impetuous Royalists pause. The Horse halted and formed on the western approach to the Heath, while skirmishers were thrown out on foot in the hope of silencing the sharp rattle of those hidden muskets.

For a few minutes it seemed that the sortie so bravely initiated was to prove abortive, for it was soon apparent that the skirmishers were numerically too weak to accomplish their task. A council of war was held, and it was decided to advance the whole line and rush the ambush with the full strength of Horse. And so they charged those banked hedges and that “walled Close”; and they charged with complete success. The ambushed musketeers broke and fled in disorder.

Northampton was not slow to take advantage of the confusion caused to the enemy’s front by the panic-stricken outposts. Re-forming, he flung his whole force upon Brereton’s centre who were occupying the middle of the Heath. The Parliament men stood their ground; but not for long. After an hour’s hand-to-hand fighting, Brereton with his main body

retreated in confusion, leaving behind him the whole of his cannon.

Now, however, the Royalists were guilty of that same heedless impetuosity that subsequently, on Naseby Field, was destined to lose for them their cause and, indirectly, the person of their Sovereign. This is how our soldier-historian quaintly puts it:—"But our men following up the execution beyond the command, and our musketeers not coming up, they got some of their cannon back again, yet we brought off eight pieces."

Not a moment too soon were the cavalry re-called, for grave danger was threatening the Royalist Left, where Gell's Horse and Foot were rallying in force preparatory to charging Northampton's reserves, and so cutting into his line of communication with Stafford. Hastily re-forming on the sloping outskirts of the Heath, the breathless Cavaliers flung themselves at this fresh menace, and all the peril that had been threatening them vanished as they charged. Again there was the shock of Horse charging Horse; again the clash of sword on halbert, of halbert on cuirass, and of swiftly-swung pole-axe upon both; and again the Parliament men were broken up and put to flight.

It was now left to Sir Thomas Byron (commanding the Prince's Regiment) to finish the day's work, and to convert a retreat into a rout. That officer, however, was immediately wounded so severely that he was compelled to quit the field, and the fall of darkness brought about a cessation of the day's hostilities. There can be no doubt but that the Royalists had won the day; but they had no intention of quitting Hopton Heath, which just then was the key to the menaced town of Stafford that lay behind them. Here, then, they bivouaced until "the next morning by break of day we made ready to fall on again. But, finding no enemy, we then understood that they had marched away in the night, an hour after our parting with them." What they did find, however, were the lines recently occupied by Brereton strewn with ammunition waggons, ammunition, and "the forecarriages of their cannon, which makes us believe they have thrown the rest of their cannon into some pooles thereabout." And, if that writer's theory is correct, those cannon

are probably lying in the bed of Hopton Pools at the present moment!

The Parliamentary casualties were 300 killed or taken prisoners, 500 wounded, over 300 horses captured, and eight guns and large stores of ammunition taken. "Gell," drily remarks the chronicler, "is certainly hurt, but not killed. He is not too forward to come into danger."

The Royalists had about 45 casualties. Among them is more than one whose name is borne honourably by descendants in the county to-day. This is particularly noticeable in the case of the two Bagots, where both surname and Christian name will be linked familiarly in the ears of many of our readers. We quote from the full list of Royalist casualties:—

"There were 25 killed, the chief whereof were Capt. Hury of my lord's own regiment, Captain Baker, lately a scholar in Oxford, Ensign Bowyer, Captain Middleton, Lieutenant Green, Coronet Billing, and Coronet Hall." There were some twenty wounded, mostly officers. Among the names recorded are those of Sir Thomas Byron, Colonel Stanhope, Colonel Wagstaffe, Captain Knotsford, Captain Richard Bagot, Captain Harvey Bagot, Captain John Clarke, Captain Thomas Harwood, Master Spencer Lucy, Lieutenant Leving, Coronet Mettham, Coronet Washington, and Master Lancaster.

From the foregoing lists two names, the names of father and son, have been purposely omitted, as deserving more special mention. The father, the Earl of Northampton, was among the slain. His son and heir, Lord Compton, was wounded in the leg. He was only nineteen and his two younger brothers—afterwards they all became highly distinguished—also fought by their father's side at Hopton Heath. Badly though Brereton and Gell had been worsted, the real tragedy of the fight fell, not upon the vanquished, but on the victors; for Northampton, the reckless and chivalrous, was dead.

Of the Earl's personal character, his adversary at Hopton Heath, Sir William Brereton, spoke in the following generous terms:—"No braver, truer, or more chivalrous nobleman followed the King's standard than he who was lost this day. He was one whom trial had ennobled and redeemed from the luxury and licence of the time, which was then thought

necessary to great fortunes. But from the beginning of the war as if he had been awakened out of a lethargy, he became self-denying, patient of hardship, prodigal of his wealth, his ease, and his life."

Of the manner of the Earl's death, let the vivid and forceful language of an eye-witness speak for itself. After recording the casualties of the two sides, he continues as follows:—

"But now we must from the sadness of our souls acquaint you with the great loss both his Majestie and the whole kingdom have sustained in this action by the death of a most loyal and hardly to be equalled subject, the most noble and most valliant Earle of Northampton. Upon the first charge of our Horse [he evidently means the charge on Brereton's centre] his horse was shot, so that he was constrained to alight. And being encompassed by enemies he fought on foot a long time, killing (as they themselves confess) a Colonel of Foot, and striking another Captain in the breast with his pole-axe; besides other common soldiers whom he wounded and slew until such time as he was overborne by multitudes. Then being knocked down with a musket and grievously wounded, and his head-piece carried off, he was offered quarter. But he answered that Northampton scorned to take quarter from such base rogues as they. And so he fought on for a long while after, until such time as he was slain by a blow with a halbert on the hinder part of the head, receiving at the same time another deep wound in the face. Which done, they hurried him away." Gell and Brereton, as we shall see immediately, refused to give up the body, and finally caused it to be buried in All Hallows Church at Derby.

To the list of Royalist casualties must be added, as we have said, that of the young Lord Compton, Northampton's son and heir. During the charge by which the threatened attack on their Left was averted, he was shot in the leg. The bereaved youth, however, is careful to make no mention of his wound when writing to his mother two days afterwards. It is a letter worthy of the son of such a sire; a letter marked by the self-restraint of a soldier, the courtesy of a gentleman, and the dignity of a nobleman. But what

must have been the mother's feelings when, having recognized her boy's handwriting, having read the first carefully-worded sentence, she turned to that fateful and significant signature, "Northampton," and knew that her son was "Compton" no longer, and that the Earl, her husband, was no more?

The letter ran as follows:—

"Dear Mother, On Sunday last we had the day of the Rebels, but our loss (especially your Honour's and mine) is not to be expressed. For though it be a general loss to the Kingdom, yet it toucheth us nearest. But, Madam, casualties in this world will happen, and in such a cause who would not have adventured both life and fortune? Pray, Madam, let this be your comfort that it was impossible for anyone to have done braver than he did. I sent a Trumpeter to know what had become of my father. He brought me a letter from Sir John Gell and Sir William Brereton, assuring me of my father's death, and making a strange demand [regarding] his body, such as were never heard of before in any warre, namely the exchange of all their ammunition, Prisoners, and Cannon which we had taken. I sent them word back that their demands were unreasonable and against the law of arms, but desired them to give free passage to some chirurgeons to embalm him, or to let their chirurgeons do it, and I would satisfy them for their pains. Their last answer is that they will neither send the body nor suffer our chirurgeons to come to embalm it, but will see that their own chirurgeons do it. Their relation was that he was assaulted by many together, and with his own hands killed the Colonel, and others also, but was unhorsed by the multitude, his horse being shot.

"Pray, Madam, be comforted, and think that no man could more honourably have ended his life to be partaker of heavenly joies. We must certainly follow him, but can hardly hope for so brave a death. Thus humbly craving your blessing, I shall remain till death

"Your obedient Son,

"NORTHAMPTON.

"Stafford, March 22, 1643."

Thus was fought out the Battle of Hopton Heath—not one of the great battles, but, considered as a reconnaissance, an engagement of the first importance. Thus, too, fell the Earl of Northampton; and the soil of Staffordshire is not dishonoured by having been stained with his blood, the blood of one who, whatever we may think of his political views, had the courage of his convictions, and in that courage knew how to die a soldier's death.

The Capture of Eccleshall Castle : 1643.

BY KARL CHERRY.

[*"I have done, Mr. Speaker; and there remains nothing now but that I become a petitioner to Almighty God that He will be pleased to bestow upon you all the patriarch's blessing, even the dew of Heaven and the fatness of Earth, and I end with that of St. Jude, 'Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied unto you.' I say again with a religious and affectionate heart, 'Mercy, peace, and love be multiplied unto you!'"—Robert Wright, Bishop of Lichfield, at the bar of the House of Commons, 1641.—From the "Harleian Miscellany."*]

FEW, even of the residents in Eccleshall itself, are familiar, we venture to think, with the details of one dramatic episode in the history of that quiet little town. The fall of the Castle at the hands of the Parliament men is vaguely understood to have come about at some period of the Cromwellian Revolution. Even oral tradition is silent concerning the particulars of a fight which afforded a fine instance of grim heroism on the part of a remnant of the shattered garrison; which turned the sleepy High Street into a shambles, and the ancient church into a military blockhouse, resounding with the clash of arms and redolent of gunpowder.

In the "*Bibliotheca Topographica Britannica*" mention is made of the siege and capitulation, but the author adds that "no account of the siege and surrender is extant." And it is a fact that all ordinary sources of information—Clarendon's "*History of the Revolution*," Camden's "*Britannica*," De Foe's "*Memoirs of a Cavalier*" (probably in this case authentic), the works contained in the Harleian Miscellany, and in those of the Somers Collection—will be searched in vain.

As a matter of fact, a contemporary chronicler, one Vicars, did describe the fall of the Castle in what we believe is the only record preserved to us. The story is embodied in an extremely scarce volume, printed in 1644 (the year following the siege) and entitled "England's Remembrancer, being the First and Second Part of a Parliamentary Chronicle from 1641 to Octob., 1643." We give the preamble to that story in the author's own quaint and simple diction:—

"Upon Wednesday, August the thirtieth, 1643, being the last day of that moneth and therefore (as in many more of our former victories) so much the more memorable, the brave and strong castle, called Eccleshall Castle, was taken by Stafford Soldiers: and thus in brief it was:—"

Whilst emulating the writer's brevity, we will give the story a modern setting, since his phraseology is not always so direct as this, and many of his allusions require some explanation.

On the previous day, the situation had become critical for both belligerents. On the one hand was the palace of a Bishop, full of armed Cavaliers, who for eight weeks had waited for the relief which was now in sight. Here they had waited, guarding the treasure of the church; guarding, too, during the past week, the body of the beloved Bishop, who lay dead in a chamber above. On the other hand, a grey parish church, full of armed men also. Grim, stern-faced men these, who had received unmoved the news of Hopton Heath, where brave, unhorsed Northampton had refused quarter at the hands of "such base rogues as you." Hopton fight, with its unwonted lesson of defeat, was not an agreeable memory for the Parliament men; but Stafford town, nevertheless, had fallen, and now they drew closer round the doomed Castle of Eccleshall, while within the church the guard piled arms and "kept their powder dry."

Surely the conflict of such men, encamped so incongruously, was not without a certain dramatic quality; for the attitude of each party, simply by reason of the strongholds they had respectively chosen, typified what was going on throughout the length and breadth of England.

We spoke, however, of relief for the Castle having at last arrived. In a measure, that was the case.

For a week or more, a strong Royalist force had been operating in the north of the county. It was commanded by Lord Capel,

the same general who afterwards defended Colchester, surrendered to Fairfax through a misapprehension of terms, escaped from the Tower, was betrayed by a boatman for £20, and was straightway beheaded. He was Lieutenant-General over Shropshire, Cheshire, and North Wales, and had he been left to himself would probably have achieved the relief of Chester. Under him was that Royalist De Wet, the ubiquitous Col. Hastings, with his corps of Cannock miners. Son of the Earl of Huntingdon, he, too, was fated to sustain a siege in his father's house at Ashby-de-la-Zouch; but with such bravery did he defend the place that he marched out with all the honours of war and a free passage to the coast. Just now he had for his colleague a soldier of the soil; in a measure, he was one himself. This was Col. Bagot, "the son of a good and powerful family in this county," who had received promotion at the hands of Prince Rupert himself, after being severely wounded at Hopton Heath.

With this force the beleagured garrison had contrived to communicate. They reported that, after a siege of eight weeks, they were *in extremis*, that the body of the old Bishop lay dead and unburied within the gates, that they also had in keeping the Bishop's lady, Lady Woolseley, and many other gentlewomen, together with plate and treasure of great value.

An advance was immediately made upon Eccleshall. Capel rushed the outposts, occupied the town, and after a brief resistance entered the Castle, "though, adds Vicars, in complaint, "Stafford men had had notice thereof enough to have prevented it." In those days, apparently, Stafford was not so enterprising as she is to-day, and to the local country-folk it must have seemed as though the war in Eccleshall was "practically over."

The relief, executed with such dash and daring, resulted, however, in a deadlock.

The Royalists, now greatly reinforced, were in the Castle, and were making elaborate preparations for the funeral of the Bishop. The church, which in its turn commanded the town, was packed with Cromwellian soldiers under Capt. Bowyer, Capt. Snow, and Capt. Mason; and—the road from Stafford was open. A force of Cavaliers occupied the main street, the inn, and the buildings that commanded the thoroughfare; but they dared not leave a foe so stubborn in their rear; besiegers and besieged had merely changed occupations.

As the morning sun broke through the mist over the marshes which at that time bordered on the little town, the look-out, posted on the church, reported good news. The road from Stafford was not only open; along it was streaming a flying column detached from the garrison in the county town and commanded by Col. Leigh. Whereupon "they in the church gave a great shout."

They did more than shout. They sallied forth and flung themselves upon "the King's party at Eccleshall town's-end." Simultaneously, the Royalist garrison of the Castle, perceiving the turn events had taken, detached a strong force to the rescue, and they had been better advised to remain where they were. The siege had resolved itself into a free fight, and round the church, where the Royalists were nipped between the old enemy and the new, the ground was quickly strewn with the bodies of the erstwhile conquerors.

The struggle was soon over. Throughout the Revolution, the King's troops seldom withstood for long the "shock tactics" of the soldiers of Cromwell. In a very short time the men who had so gallantly galloped in but a few hours before were paralyzed by panic unworthy of their courageous leaders, and the town being once more in the hands of the Cromwellians, the latter again made the Castle their objective.

"Whereupon," writes Vicars, "all that were in the Castle and all the King's partie in the town cryed out 'Horse! Horse!' and presently fled away in haste and distraction." The countryside and the neighbouring marshes were soon swarming with Cavaliers flying in every direction—save one; for, on the distant horizon, the stately tower of St. Mary's warned them off the town which at the psychological moment had furnished the means of their defeat.

When Vicars tells us that the fugitives included "all that were in the Castle" he is only conveying what was in the minds of his comrades at the moment of victory. This impression, however, he hastens to correct, for one captain and 10 men had remained true to their post. Also there was one other who may be said to have resisted the besiegers, not by force of arms, but by silent protest. For when the Parliament men reached the Castle gate they discovered, outside, the body of the aged prelate, shamefully abandoned in the hurry of the flight. Here, also, had been cast away "a trunck of plate which they had meant to carry away with them. Hereupon, we seized on *all* they had left behind

[there is a grim touch about that "all"] . . . a great deal of treasure worth many thousands of pounds."

So fierce, however, was the resistance met with at the gate that the Cromwellians withdrew to the church, and there they held a council of war. One of the prisoners captured during the street fighting was summoned before them. Under examination, the chicken-hearted fellow completed the disgrace of his party by disclosing the numerical weakness of the defenders. "Whereupon, that next night our men set upon the Castle." Naturally; but it was not without a struggle that they at last possessed themselves of the gate and drawbridge; and then came the end. "Capt. Snow and the captain within the Castle entering on a short parlie, the Castle was soon delivered up on free quarter [being given], and so the very strong and almost impregnable Castle, and a place of great consequence in these parts, was, by the good Providence of God, taken by us."

In conclusion, a few words must be said of the Bishop whose dead body was an unconscious witness of the fray. I have spoken of him as "beloved," and so he undoubtedly was; but outside his diocese he was looked upon askance as a man of covetous disposition. Anthony Wood, bluntest of biographers, describes him in his "*Athenæ Oxonienses*" as "much given up to the affairs of the world." He was charged with impoverishing, to his own interest, the episcopal property in Bristol, prior to his translation to Lichfield. He certainly acquired during his episcopacy an enormous quantity of landed property, which included the Manor of Newnham Courteney, in Oxfordshire, for which he paid £18,000, equivalent to about £40,000 in our present money. He is also said to have made havoc with the timber on the episcopal estate at Eccleshall. On the other hand he renovated a large number of churches in the diocese, and greatly improved the quality of the music. He was a symbolist, who insisted upon the use of the cope by his clergy.

He was arrested in anticipation of an impeachment for high treason, and, at the bar of the House of Commons, made the speech an extract from which stands as an ironical text at the head of this article. "I desire," he concluded, "to regain the esteem which I have been long in getting, and have lost in a moment. If I should outlive, I say not my bishopric, but

my credit, then my grey hairs would be brought in sorrow to the grave."

He was released on heavy bail. By his death he was spared the humiliation of seeing his cause defeated; and his only son, after squandering an immense fortune, died, a wretched starveling, in a debtor's prison.

Nothing remains to-day to indicate the doings of August, 1643, Though it were but an "affair of outposts," it is well, perhaps, that an incident so dramatic should not be wholly forgotten nor remain buried in the pages of a book so scarce as "England's Remembrancer."

Victoria and Alfred: an Appreciation, a Comparison, and a Retrospect.

BY J. L. CHERRY.

A WEEK ago this nation was called upon to endure, and that for the first time in more than sixty years, acute anxiety on account of the serious illness of its Sovereign.* Notwithstanding the Queen's great age, the alarming bulletins of Saturday found her loving subjects quite unable to realize that her life was in imminent danger; but in a few short hours it became clear that hope of recovery must be abandoned. The end came very soon, for on Tuesday evening the almost idolized Mother of her People passed away into the Unseen.

It is cause for devout thankfulness that the august patient was spared a death of lingering pain. This is one of those thoughts which console and sustain the nation under the shock of her almost sudden removal. The grief of the people of this country has no parallel in its history, because never before has the nation, as such, been so sorely bereaved. Its records are rich in memories of the good and the great, but take together Queen Victoria's nobility of character, her vast experience, and the glory of her reign, and it seems to be beyond dispute that she is the grandest figure in English history.

It is becoming that we point out some of those qualities of the late Sovereign which justify this estimate of her worth. And, first of all, her Majesty was not only distinguished by the possession of the highest and purest virtues which adorn humanity, but she was supremely excellent in the practice of them. Such words may sound like adulation; they would betray that weakness if applied to any other Royal personage in English history; but our deliberate conviction is that the words are those of simple truth and soberness.

* The reader will understand that this article appeared in *The Staffordshire Advertiser* at the time of the Queen's death.

Take, for example, the Queen's conduct as wife and mother. Was ever wifely devotion more tender, more confiding, more absolute? And what exalted ideas of widowhood had the Queen! Twenty years of spotless fidelity did not satisfy her conception of what was due to her husband; she lived with him in spirit for another forty years. And as to her maternal duties, it is only necessary to remind ourselves that of all her many descendants of three generations there is not one whom the Queen did not inspire with warm and tender affection, the quality of which is beautifully shown in the letters of the Princess Alice. By precept and example and by her natural benignity, she exercised an exceptional influence on the moral training of her children and her children's children.

And what shall we say of the display in the Queen of such personal qualities as fortitude, resignation, and submission to the Divine will? It is doubtful whether any of us fully realize that, in the case of the Queen,

When sorrows came they came not single spies,
But in battalions.

Think only of the deaths in her own family since the passing away of the Prince Consort, and add to this the fact that many years ago the last of the friends of her earlier years was taken from her. Such a succession of bereavements would have saddened the life of the humblest of her subjects; but they were calmly accepted and endured the while the Queen bore without intermission a full share in the government of a vast Empire, and faced with serenity all the onerous duties of her high station.

The Queen being an essentially religious woman, we trace to these frequent and heavy trials another noble and precious characteristic, namely, that sympathy with suffering humanity which so distinguished her. All the world has seen how purifying and exalting even the most grievous bereavements became in her Majesty's case, and how they quickened into liveliest action the compassionate qualities of her gentle nature. Her loving subjects were always ready to honour her unassailable rectitude, her absolute disinterestedness, her loyalty to the Constitution, her vast experience in statesmanship, the maturity of her wisdom, the beneficence of her moral influence, her sagacity in council, her intellectual gifts and graces. Much might be said under each of these heads, but, after all, it was that quality of sympathy which more than anything

else inspired the nation with a fervour of affection without precedent in history. It was one of the finest of our late Sovereign's moral and social qualities, and at the same time it is that which least calls for illustration. Scarcely a week has passed since the outbreak of this deplorable war in South Africa which has not its record of her tender consideration for the sick and wounded and yearning compassion for the bereaved and desolate. Here, too, we have the source of another unique fact brought out by the death of the Queen—that not only her own people but all the world held her in reverence and regarded her as a model in every relation of life.

* * * * *

The mortal remains of the great and good Queen Victoria have been laid to rest by the side of the husband whom she loved so well. The obsequies were a happy combination of grandeur, dignity, and simplicity, and they were performed amid demonstrations of affection, sorrow, and reverence which, like the character of the late Sovereign, have had no precedent in history. The whole civilized world was present in spirit at the funeral of her Majesty. In all countries the ministers of religion bore eloquent testimony to the pure, gracious, benevolent, self-sacrificing character of the departed Monarch, to the beauty and value of her example, and to her loyalty as a constitutional Sovereign. In a scarcely less degree that may also be said of the Press of all countries. Humanity has for the first time united in one sublime chorus to the praise and honour of one individual of its many millions, and that one a woman. Surely this was a climax to all the homage that has ever been paid to her sex in speech or song, and women everywhere may well be proud and contented at the reverence shown for them in the person of the illustrious Mother of her people. . . .

There is just one interesting aspect of the subject which has barely been touched upon by our contemporaries, and regarding which a few words may not be out of place. We refer to the remarkable analogy that exists between Queen Victoria and the most illustrious of all her predecessors and ancestors, that ruler who passed away exactly a thousand years ago—Alfred, King of the West Saxons. There was a striking resemblance in the two Monarchs in the nobility of their characters, their enlightened statesmanship, and their intense patriotism.

The late Professor Freeman, in his "Norman Conquest," says of Alfred that he is "the most perfect character in history.

No other man on record has ever so thoroughly united all the virtues both of the ruler and the private man. In no other man on record were so many virtues disfigured by so little alloy. A saint without superstition, a scholar without ostentation, a warrior all whose wars were fought in the defence of his country, a conqueror whose laurels were never stained by cruelty, a prince never cast down by adversity, never lifted up to insolence in the hour of triumph ; there is no other name in history to compare with his." Mr. Freeman does honour to Marcus Aurelius, Charles the Great, Louis the Pious, Edward I., and George Washington ; but he insists that the purest fame belongs to Alfred. Commenting on the passage just quoted, the latest biographer of King Alfred* says "Professor Freeman writes as an enthusiast, and rightly, for it requires enthusiasm to speak justly of Alfred. The King has the soul-kindling qualities which flame from some few of the men and women whose souls are themselves kindled with fire of the Most High. It is no marvel when those who write of him catch some spark of the sacred fire." Had Professor Freeman lived to see the end of Victoria's reign we cannot doubt that he would have qualified his remark that "Alfred is the most perfect character in history," and would have admitted that a greater even than Alfred was here in the person of the high-souled, tender-hearted, serenely dignified, wise, gracious, and clear-visioned Queen whose loss the country and the world deploras.

But the contrast between the England of Alfred's day and the England of Queen Victoria is nothing short of marvellous. During the thousand years that have passed since the death of Alfred, England has slowly but steadily worked out her destiny, and the English-speaking race now holds the primacy of the world. Alfred was not even King of England, but, until quite late in life, King only of Wessex—the district to which we apply to this day the term the West of England. But the beginnings of the nation's greatness were with Alfred. London had been a port of some consequence in Roman times, but had been occupied and partly demolished by the piratical Danes. Alfred drove them out, rebuilt the city walls, and made London the capital. The area was probably the square mile, thinly-peopled, which we know as the City. The London of Queen Victoria is the commercial capital of the world ;

* "Alfred the West Saxon King of the British," by Dugald Macfadyen, M.A.

it covers a vast area, probably a hundred square miles, and has a population of between four and five millions. Alfred built the first English navy—boats manned by oarsmen, and with such vessels he fought our first naval battle. When we think of the wealth, the skill, the energy, and the patriotism which have secured for us whole fleets of floating fortresses, one of which squadrons stretched across the Solent to pay the last honours to its late Mistress, the imagination is bewildered by the contrast.

Such education as the English had at the beginning of Alfred's reign was almost exclusively monkish; it was in the hands of ecclesiastics and its chief motive was the training of ecclesiastics. It was carried on in Latin, but Alfred had a number of the best books in that language (Boethius' "Consolations of Philosophy" and Bede's "Church History," for example) translated into the tongue of the common people, while "Orosius" gave them the rudiments of history, geography, and natural science. Like his great descendant, Alfred was essentially and not conventionally religious; in other words, to quote again the biography to which we have already referred, "He did not aim either at diffusing knowledge, or limiting it, in order to meet the immediate requirements" of theologians, which is obscurantism, but "he aimed at letting light and order and wisdom into men's minds, because an illuminate and informed manhood is more to the glory of God than an ignorant manhood, and God is better served by an intelligent than a mechanical obedience." Queen Victoria had less power of initiative than Alfred, because our Parliament is both the legislative and the executive authority in educational matters, but we know enough of her private opinions to feel sure that her aspirations for the elevation of her people were as high-minded as those of the great King, and that she had as little sympathy as he with obscurantism.

Alfred reformed the judiciary; he developed the germ of the jury system which the Saxons brought over from their homeland; "he was England's first great economist;" he was patron of the nascent art of his day, and especially of writers and illuminators of literary manuscripts; his coinage, though rude, was on an ample scale; he was peacemaker between litigants, but enforced obedience to the law; and he was far ahead of his time in recognizing the principle of the brotherhood of nations.

Of course the altered conditions of modern life prevent the attribution in every case of corresponding personal service on the part of Queen Victoria ; but in every similar respect, and in very much more not mentioned here, her influence was powerfully and constantly exerted on the side of enlightenment, justice, truth, and righteousness. What, then, is "the conclusion of the whole matter?" This: all that Alfred did, though excellent in itself, was on a scale so minute that its smallness can only be realized by a strong mental effort, and yet he is honoured and revered by the whole English-speaking race after the lapse of a thousand years. Every good work of the King was multiplied and repeated on a magnificent scale in the reign of the Queen, and vast territories never dreamt of by Alfred or his contemporaries have shared in the blessing. As we have already intimated, the general elevation of the people, which received its first impulse from Alfred, has wrought great changes in the position of the Sovereign of this realm, with whom the initiative of beneficent legislation no longer rests ; but not only has every project of Parliament for the amelioration of the condition of the people had the Queen's cordial concurrence, but during the whole of her reign she brought her unique personal influence to bear with the view of making such legislation as efficacious as possible. Taking character and career together, who will presume to set limits to the duration of the fame of Queen Victoria? Adapting a few lines of Tennyson's "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington," let us say—

Her work is done ;

But while the races of mankind endure,
Let her great example stand
Colossal, seen of every land,
And keep the soldier firm, the statesman pure ;
Till in all lands and through all human story
The path of duty be the way to glory.

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